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Ministry Patterns of Clergy Married to Clergy within an Ecosystem of Power in the Church of England

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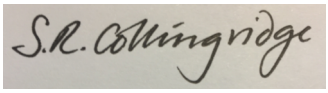
Declaration

The material being presented for examination is my own work and has not been submitted for an award of this or another HEI except in minor particulars which are explicitly noted in the body of the thesis. Where research pertaining to the thesis was undertaken collaboratively, the nature and extent of my individual contribution has been made explicit.

Signed 

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List of Abbreviations

ACCM	Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry (now Ministry Division)
ABM	Advisory Board of Ministry (now Ministry Division)
BAP	Bishops' Advisory Panel
CMC	Clergy Married to Clergy
DACE	Diaconal Association of the Church of England
DDO	Diocesan Director of Ordinands
DRASC	Deployment, Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee
HR	Human Resources
NCIs	National Church Institutions
PCC	Parochial Church Council
PTO	Permission to Officiate

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Ministry Patterns of Clergy Married to Clergy in the Church of England within an Ecosystem of Power

Abstract

There have been clergy married to clergy (CMC) in the Church of England for over thirty years yet their ministries are little understood and there is limited consistency of practice regarding CMC in the church. This work aims to address both problems. The thesis argues that CMC patterns of ministry are formed during their careers within an ecosystem of power: a complex network of elements and forces acting on and in reaction to each other. The CMC ecosystem of power is akin to ecosystems in nature. It includes dyadic dynamics and extends to family and local ministry contexts, diocese and wider church. CMC are subject to various types of power and can also exert influence.

For this study 15 CMC individuals were interviewed from a range of dioceses, ministry contexts and life-stages. Each interview was structured by constructing a timeline of ministry/job changes and key personal and family events. The emerging picture of CMC patterns of ministry from qualitative interview data was enriched by quantitative data from participants' timelines to illuminate factors influencing their ministry patterns.

My research indicates that CMC experience the effect of the church's authority in negative or positive ways, most emphatically during the early period of selection, initial training and curacy. CMC are doubly vulnerable to external constraints from the institution because both spouses are dependent on the church for work, home and income. Further constraints come from liabilities, responsibilities and expectations within family and wider social networks. CMC moderate their vulnerability through adhering to 'independent', 'tangential' or 'integrated' models of ministry. In the light of such choices they make decisions about applying for jobs, leaving posts and engaging in part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid, parish or non-parochial ministry.

Within CMC ecosystems of power, support and competition influence how CMC ministries develop, notably within the CMC dyad (couple), the most distinctive feature of CMC ministry life. CMC spouses offer reciprocal support through understanding, practical and professional help, echoing the mutuality in natural ecosystems. CMC also decide whether one partner's ministry has priority and which one takes precedence at different times. I argue that competition between CMC partners has the potential to create a positive outcome of growth and development for CMC by creating awareness of asymmetry and encouraging development of their personal and professional relationship.

I make suggestions for future research and indicate limitations to this study. I propose recommendations for improved practice with CMC in the Church of England such as greater openness about diocesan policies and more consistent training for senior clergy.

Summary of Portfolio

My insight into clergy married to clergy (CMC) comes first from being married for 20 years to a fellow priest (1988-2010). I realised that the professional doctorate enabled me to combine my experience with academic criticl distance to investigate CMC. I was inspired that practical theology supports improving practice (Swinton and Mowat, 2016) by which CMC could become more fruitful in ministry and senior clergy and others could develop better ways of working with CMC. With that aim each part of my research portfolio led to the final research and the thesis that CMC ministry patterns form over time through an ecosystem of power.

Mapping literature revealed a single British monograph focussed on CMC marriage relationships (Walrond-Skinner, 1998), with remaining material mainly from ecumenical North American contexts. Official church guidelines shifted from encouraging flexibility for flourishing ministry (ACCM, 1986) to insisting that CMC take responsibility for their ministry decisions (Ministry Division, 2009). Power was a persistent undercurrent: CMC seemed vulnerable in the institution (Transformations, 2011) and competition between spouses was evident but under-explored. I found no reliable numerical data on British CMC.

As a result I sought to establish the scope of CMC ministry in the Church of England. I conducted quantitative research based on public information (Crockford, 2013) and contact with individual dioceses. The resulting article (Collingridge, 2015) established that there were 26% more CMC than thought by church authorities (1160, rather than the estimated 900) who were in non-parochial ministry more than other clergy (11.8% CMC are chaplains rather than 8.1%, with 20.2% CMC being non-parochial). Why such ministry patterns occur was unexplained and factors affecting CMC patterns of ministry were unidentified.

As ex-CMC I wondered if my experience would hinder my research. Would CMC participants react negatively to my divorce, for example? In my reflexive practice assignment I considered whether I could be both an insider and an outsider (Knott, 2005). I reflected on the incarnational model, where the divine is both apart from and embedded in human reality, just as, with concerted reflexivity, the researcher could be aloof from CMC experience while intrinsically part of it.

The natural next step was to investigate through qualitative methods how CMC ministry patterns develop (Mason, 2002). For my research proposal I developed a timeline method of structuring interviews (Adriansen, 2012; Sharma, 2015) to capture changes over time and elicit quantitative data to supplement interview analysis, providing greater depth of understanding of CMC.

In my thesis I argue from my research with 15 CMC that, within an ecosystem of power, forces from church and family/social networks combine with CMC's priorities and decision-making to form CMC ministry patterns over time.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Two such as you with such a master speed
Cannot be parted nor be swept away
From one another once you are agreed
That life is only life forevermore
Together wing to wing and oar to oar.
Master Speed, by Robert Frost (extract). Written for his daughter's wedding.[1]

There have been clergy married to clergy (CMC) serving in the Church of England for over 30 years, yet little is known about the ministry lives of this growing group. I argue in this thesis that CMC ministry patterns are formed over time within a complex network of relationships characterised by diverse expressions of power. The imagery of the poem 'Master Speed' captures the hopeful potential of two individuals working to a combined aim. As a bird's wings work in tandem to move the creature smoothly through the air, or two rowers exert their strength to propel their boat swiftly through the water, so a couple can bring their efforts in life and work for a joint purpose. Working together, their strengths have greater effect and their weaknesses are allowed for by a partner's sympathetic adjustment. Essential to the endeavour is symmetry of power without which bird or rowers will circle fruitlessly. In this thesis I contend that the central dyadic relationship of CMC is integrated in an ecosystem of power. Redolent of ecosystems in nature, this is a web of diverse forces and influences reaching through CMC's dyadic, family, work and institutional situations, shaping their patterns of ministry over time. The ecosystem extends to the wider institution of the church and local settings of CMC ministries. Not only are CMC subject to various types of power that constrain and steer their decisions, but they also exert power that helps direct their ministries over time by taking opportunities available to them and through choosing priorities expressed in models of ministry.

[1] E. C. Lathem (Ed.). 2002. *The poetry of Robert Frost: The collected poems, complete and unabridged*. New York NY: Henry Holt.

In this introductory chapter I explain the lacuna for my research by presenting the phenomenon of CMC through existing literature and previous research in the context of my own experience as CMC and current CMC practice. I introduce the timeline interview study of the ministry patterns of 15 CMC individuals in the Church of England and summarise the content of the thesis. Through a better understanding of CMC ministry patterns, the aim of this research is to improve practice for CMC and those working with them in dioceses and the national church, in keeping with practical theological motivation of 'ensuring faithful and transformative practice' (Swinton and Mowat, 2016, p.24). In her updated assessment of religion in Britain Grace Davie's (2015) assertion in relation to national religion is also true of the Church of England as an institution that, 'if religion is to be effectively managed, it must be thoroughly researched' (p.xiii). Likewise, if the church is to be fruitful in addressing the spiritual need of the world it serves, it needs to understand its ministers not only to value and equip them as a primary resource, but also to manage and care for them as people.

So Little Learned: A Research Imperative

Attending a training day for clergy in 2011 I was disturbed by a conversation with an ordained woman with young children and a priest husband. Struggling to navigate her maternity leave and ministry with both local church and diocesan officers, so many of her experiences could have been my own, a generation earlier. My ordination as a deacon in 1988 began 20 years of ministry as CMC. Our training curacies started with one full stipendiary post (held by my then husband) and one non-stipendiary post (held by me), but we soon negotiated with our archdeacon to change the arrangement to sharing a stipend between us. This had the advantages of equal remuneration to reflect our equal status as full-time stipendiary clergy and of reduced tax liability. In spite of many years of experience across the Church of England, senior clergy working with CMC are evidently still left to discover for themselves what can be done for CMC and how to arrange it. Why has so little cumulative wisdom been established over the 30 years of CMC Church of England ministry? How might the contribution of CMC to the mission and ministry of the church be improved? Such questions began my research journey. As I show below, existing British research from the late 1990s

focuses on CMC marriage relationships. This complements more recent studies of male and female clergy that sometimes include CMC participants but do not seek to explore their specific situation in depth. Further CMC research is in a North American ecumenical context where different legal church regulations pertain, limiting its applicability to the Church of England. Realising that the academic project could benefit from combining my CMC experience with the greater critical distance of now being a former-CMC researcher, I became determined to increase understanding of CMC ministry in the church. In my view the limited amount of research focussing on CMC ministry in the Church of England helps explain the persistently limited understanding of CMC by some senior clergy and the accompanying implications for practice and ad hoc responses to CMC ministries.

Who Are CMC and What Is Their Place in the Church of England?

Confusion arises in the literature through the range of terms for couples where both are ordained ministers. 'Clergy couples' has been used in various studies to mean a 'married couple, each person licensed and each employed by the church' (Detrick & Detrick, 1982, p.170) both by researchers in North America (Kieren & Munro, 1988, 1989) and the UK (Saunders, 1988). It is terminology also used by departments of the Church of England (Ministry Division, 2009). However 'clergy couples' can also be taken to mean any marriage including one ordained person (Mace & Mace, 1980; Merill, 1985). Other writers use 'joint clergy couple' (Walrond-Skinner, 1998), 'dual-clergy marriages' (Rallings & Pratto, 1984) or 'dual clergy couple' (Chapman, 2004). Several organisations, events and consultations involving CMC such as Double Vision (1992) and the St George's House Consultation (1998) have employed the term 'ordained couples'.[2] My initial intention was to use the term 'ordained

[2] Double Vision was a conference in 1992 at Swanwick, Derbyshire, for 75 couples sponsored by 33 dioceses when women were deacons by not yet priests. Attendance was estimated to have been around 30% of all CMC (Double Vision, 1992). St George's House, Windsor held a consultation in 1998, called *Marital Bliss and Ministerial Enigma,* including invited CMC as well as some officials and senior clergy.

couples' as it was chosen by those involved in such ministry and also because it distinguishes from couples where only one partner is ordained ('clergy couples') as well and from clergy in 'joint ministry' who share a ministry context.

However, through conversations with CMC and diocesan staff during this research it emerged that some clergy prefer not to be identified as couples in the context of their ministry lives. Such clergy see themselves as functioning separately in the sphere of ministry and want to be thought of and treated by others in their professional lives without reference to their spouses. As I discuss in later chapters the marriage of two clergy persons can have a bearing on ministry-related decisions of either individual regardless of their preferred ways of working. For example, a couple needs to find ministry roles that are both located within a reasonable distance from where the family lives and that enable them to sustain a committed relationship and to meet their needs as a family. I therefore formulated the term 'clergy married to clergy' because it is descriptively accurate yet does not infer particular models of marriage and/or ministry.

The Emergence of CMC in the Church of England

Historically the presence and prominence of CMC has tracked that of women in leadership; CMC in the Church of England first arose with the ordination of women. The first deaconess was licensed in London in 1862 and women also worked as licensed lay workers in local churches (DACE, 2010), with some of these laywomen married to priests. However, from 1987 women could become clergy by being ordained as deacons (along with men in their first year of ordained ministry). Unlike lay ministers, deacons are styled as 'reverend' and may wear a clerical collar. Lay workers and deaconesses could undergo selection for ordination and any appropriate training and so have their existing ministries affirmed and developed as clergy. Deacons may take any service apart from Holy Communion and undertake everything expected of clergy apart from activities reserved for priests, such as pronouncing absolution after confession and giving a blessing. Some permanent deacons led congregations, supported by male priests who took communion services for them (Wallis, 2004). From 1994 women could be ordained as priests. More subsequently became incumbents of

parishes as well as an increasing number eventually being appointed as dignitaries in senior roles of residentiary canons, cathedral deans, and archdeacons.[3] Ultimately in 2015, following legislative change, Libby Lane was the first woman consecrated bishop in the Church of England (Brown, 2015). My recent study to ascertain the numbers and spread of the ministry of CMC reveals that there are 1160 individual CMC, 26.4% more than the church's latest published figures (Collingridge, 2015; Ministry Division, 2009), illustrating both the established presence of CMC and the limited information about CMC within the institution. Ten of the first 18 female bishops were CMC, emphasising the increased public visibility of this group.[4]

The Distinctiveness of CMC Marriages

Existing research about CMC is slight. Many publications focus on psychological or therapeutic aspects of CMC life and work, located in North American rather than British settings. Sue Walrond-Skinner's (1998) *Double Blessing*: *Clergy Marriage Since the Ordination of Women as Priests* remains the only major work relating to Church of England CMC. As marriage therapist

[3] This definition of 'dignitaries' is taken from the annual publication of church statistics (Research and Statistics, 2018a).

[4] According to information from diocesan websites and *Crockford's Clerical Directory* (Crockford, online), up to April 2019 this list includes: Jo Bailey-Wells, Bishop of Dorking (married to Sam Wells, parish priest), Guli Francis-Dehqani, bishop of Loughborough (married to Lee, parish priest), Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster (married to Jeremy, theological education institution principal), Anne Hollinghurst, Bishop of Aston (married to Steve, team rector and rural dean), Emma Ineson, Bishop of Penrith (married to Matt, parish priest), Libby Lane, Bishop of Derby (married to George, chaplain), Jackie Searle, Bishop of Crediton (married to David Runcorn, priest, freelance consultant and spiritual director), Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester (married to Guy, former parish priest), Alison White, Bishop of Hull (married to Frank, retired bishop) and Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton (married to Howard, theological education institution vice-principal).

and CMC, Walrond-Skinner assesses the impact of women's priesthood on clergy marriages over the two years following women's priesting, giving particular attention to CMC. Compared to other clergy couples, Walrond-Skinner identifies in CMC high levels of mutuality and intra-couple similarity (p.221), which she argues are indicators of marital satisfaction. However, CMC may risk fusion and lack of differentiation through their similarities, with 'the fear that the individuality of each partner may become erased, to the detriment of each and ultimately to the impoverishment of the relationship itself' (p.221). This, Walrond-Skinner suggests, can be especially pertinent to female CMC in a male-dominated institution as they risk becoming subsumed by their husband's identity. In addition, she notes the apparent incongruity between CMC espousing egalitarian models of marriage and their limited gender parity in domestic arrangements, ministry practice and opportunities. The longitudinal element of Walrond-Skinner's research failed to identify substantial changes in CMC marriages over the two years following women being ordained priest, which I consider likely to be due to the women's existing high level of engagement in ministry as deacons and the limited practical alterations of lifestyle or activity over the period of study. A follow-up or longer scale project could provide greater insight by including the ensuing years when increasing numbers of ordained women took on incumbency-level responsibilities (and beyond).

Alongside its conclusions about CMC marriage, Walrond-Skinner's work illuminates the experience of CMC during a pioneering phase of women's ordination. CMC partners are seen as avoiding the problem of competition between them by wives taking unpaid and/or part-time work thus 'removing that partner from the potential competition' (p.132). This may not be the only explanation, however, as diocesan policies on CMC (where present) sometimes stipulated that CMC women would be unpaid when their husbands were stipendiary (p.136), thus reducing the likelihood of CMC women being paid at that time. Asked 'whether a [CMC] couple as an institution constituted something of unique value in its own right… or merely two priests who happened to be married to one another' (p.152) almost half of Walrond-Skinner's CMC participants agreed that 'the fact that they were both priests had [some] symbolic/spiritual meaning for them' (p.151). The stated implication of this

question to ‘affect the expectations one might have upon the Church in shaping policies that would either exploit their potential to the full or simply ‘manage’ the logistical difficulties that they obviously pose’ (p.152) was perhaps disproportionate in its ambition. However, the diverse responses suggest that many CMC experience marriage to a fellow priest as more than a pragmatic arrangement but one with the potential to bring greater depth of meaning to both marriage and ministry for themselves and others in, for example, egalitarianism, shared ministry, being human, male and female working together and greater understanding and unity. The confluence of the dual covenants and vocations of marriage and ministry is, in Walrond-Skinner’s spearheading research, approached from the perspective of marriage relationships, pointing to the need for more attention to be given to CMC ministry in the British context.

Learning from Non-British CMC Ministries

CMC ministry is the subject of an ecumenical North American study by Kieren and Munro (1988) arguing that CMC are at high risk of absorptiveness and boundary enmeshment through their demanding roles. Kieren and Munro (1989) subsequently conclude that CMC experience a gap in support from friends and wider family because it is difficult for them to find suitable posts together, leading CMC to be geographically distanced from their supportive social networks. These principles have found resonance across denominations and countries in CMC studies regarding both marriage and ministry. Other research is more limited in its application to the Church of England where, for instance, CMC are not widely able to engage in joint church leadership on an official basis because the ‘office-holder’ status of clergy means that an office may only be held by one individual (Drake, 2015; UK Government, 2019). Studies concerning combined ministries are therefore of limited usefulness in the current Church of England context, with Bentley (2001) finding ‘little evidence of job-sharing’ (p.210). Sigmon and Sigmon’s (2001) auto-ethnographic doctoral work on co-pastoring a Presbyterian congregation in North America concludes that clergy need a high level of stability in their marriage and their respective

individual ministries before embarking on co-pastoring a congregation.[5] They argue that co-pastors face 'triangulation' when, according to Friedman's (1985) family systems theory, congregations behave as family members in their demands and expectations on clergy and can disrupt CMC relationships. CMC who choose integrated ministry models (see chapter five) may benefit from this understanding. With training curacies at the start of ordained ministry being the most straightforward posts for CMC wishing to explore joint ministry and job-sharing, Sigmon and Sigmon's recommendation to delay co-pastoring is too restrictive for Church of England CMC in practice. Changes in working practices through Common Tenure has additionally reduced the ability of bishops to appoint CMC to lead congregations together through the restriction of how 'priest-in-charge' appointments are to be applied.[6] CMC who do wish to co-lead congregations may otherwise be known locally as 'joint vicars' but in official terms one partner normally holds the more senior office of vicar/rector while the other partner is the assistant curate.[7] My research project builds on previous work by establishing a better understanding of CMC ministry across different ministry contexts and over time.

[5] Unusually, Sigmon and Sigmon's DMin. thesis was constructed jointly in reflection of their subject, joint congregational ministry.

[6] Before the introduction of Common Tenure regulations bishops had used their powers to appoint 'priests-in-charge' so CMC could share posts normally held by a sole office-holder. However, under the regulations of Common Tenure (Ecclesiastical offices [terms of service] measure, Church of England, 2009) priests-in-charge are specifically 'put in charge of a benefice whilst it is vacant… usually …where the patron's right of presentation to the benefice is suspended' (Guide to Common Tenure, Church of England, 2016, 4.1). Anecdotal evidence suggests that some dioceses continue to suspend livings and appoint CMC as joint priests-in-charge to allow CMC to express their equal roles fully.

[7] For example http://www.stjamesalperton.org.uk/leaders Retrieved 3rd May 2019.

Church of England CMC Ministries in Research: Practicalities, Policies and Scale

Practical, financial and policy aspects of CMC life impact their ministries. Lesley Bentley (2001) suggests that Church of England CMC struggle coordinating to find two posts and that barriers are created by housing problems when both spouses are appointed to incumbencies. Bentley's chapter was based on a survey by DRASC (Deployment, Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee) in which diocesan officers shared information and concerns about CMC ministry. Bentley identifies how few CMC couples both receive full stipends and the high number (10%) who are 'non-stipendiary other than by choice' (p.208), illustrating limitations to CMC self-determination in ministry patterns. Bentley highlights a dearth of diocesan CMC policies and the recommendation to provide, if not a unified national policy, then exemplar diocesan policies. Ministry Division (2009) guidelines on CMC (*Clergy Couples Guidance*) followed Bentley's work but it is likely that CMC ministerial experiences have changed since both publications, 18 and nine years ago respectively. Despite the 2009 guidelines, a lack of consistent policy for CMC pertains and updated information is needed on CMC ministry. The current status of the Ministry Division guidelines is currently ambiguous: they are the most recent of a series of such guidelines for CMC and ten years after their publication they have not been superseded. However, the guidelines are not easily available from Church of England sources and are not commonly distributed to CMC and those working with them. As a result many CMC and senior clergy are not fully familiar with them. Nevertheless they remain important as the latest official Church of England document dedicated to CMC practice, valuable in documenting the development of CMC ministry within the Church of England and helpful for containing some constructive suggestions for CMC practice. Although official views of the state of CMC ministry are valuable within a hierarchical institution because of their impact on policy and practice for clergy, the perspectives of CMC remain minimally heard in existing literature.

Through my recent research into CMC ministry (Collingridge, 2015) from diocesan and publicly available sources such as *Crockford's Clerical Directory* (Crockford, 2013), I established a picture in which CMC are more

likely than other clergy to engage in non-parochial ministry at any one time (11.8% of ministerially active CMC are chaplains compared to 8.1% of all clergy, with 20.2% of CMC holding non-parochial posts). I also found weak gender parity: although CMC wives working in the same ministry context as their husbands are rarely in the senior position of the two (11.9%), CMC women are more likely than other ordained women to be dignitaries.[8] That study establishes a snapshot of CMC ministry constituting new knowledge of the distinctiveness of CMC in the Church of England. Because of its snap-shot quantitative nature, however, the work does not reveal changes in types or focus of ministry over the course of CMC lives or the factors influencing their ministry patterns. Qualitative research is needed to create a fuller, 'multi-dimensional' perspective (Mason, 2006, p.9) to establish implications of CMC ministry patterns with regard to their ministry contexts, social networks or the wider institution. The present research aims to uncover factors contributing to CMC patterns of ministry, seeking to increase knowledge about the place of CMC in the Church of England. I hope that such further understanding will benefit CMC for their wellbeing and perhaps equip the church to retain trained individuals in active ministry at a time of anticipated clergy shortages and increased recruitment to ordained ministry (Sherwood, 2016; Church of England, 2016c).

Church of England Clergywomen and Contemporary Ministry Experience

While CMC research is rare in the Church of England setting, recent clergy studies contextualise the current field by attending to ordained women and the nature of clergy experience. These studies illuminate the impact on clergy of external expectations from the public gaze as well as personal motivations of both internalised expectations and vocational commitment. Peyton & Gatrell (2013) examined clergy in middle-management roles (area/rural deans) from the perspective of organisational/management studies, including a small number of CMC. The authors identify the 'sacrificial embrace' in which, faced with the demands of the priesthood, clergy prioritise their vocation by choosing not to maintain clear boundaries between home and ministry life. This echoes Kieren and Munro's (1988) notion of greedy clergy roles experienced in concentrated

[8] The research was conducted before any women were made bishops.

form by CMC, adding an emphasis on clergy's actions and choices. Greene & Robbins (2015) and Greene (2018) apply an employment-relations analysis to the experience of ordained women within the gendered organisation of the church, interviewing 21 ordained women who are currently or previously stipendiary. Greene & Robbins see 'sacrificial embrace' exhibited in particularly gendered forms within an organisation that allows for discriminatory attitudes by those who refuse the ministry of women (see E. Percy, 2017). Indeed clergywomen are alert to nuances of difference between 'explicit and implicit opposition; differences in how their ministry is perceived by others; and tensions in ministry between their internal and their external worlds.' (Robbins and Green, 2018, p.890). It is not clear whether the experience of gendered opposition is altered in the context of a CMC relationship, perhaps by the 'sheltering' by CMC women in the shadow of their husbands (Walrond-Skinner 1998) or by CMC women holding a different status in the perception of conservative opposition because of their marriage to a fellow priest.

Ordained women not only experience the effects of others' words and actions in their ministry context and the wider church, but also they effect change through their own attitudes, behaviour and navigation of the social world. Sarah-Jane Page (2011, 2016a, 2016b) explores how female clergy and their husbands manage their lives within a gendered institution. Having interviewed 17 ordained mothers Page argues that the scrutiny to which they are subject as priests is redoubled in their role as mothers. In their 'resisting, recasting and renegotiating [of] sacred terrain in subtle and nuanced ways' they begin to challenge and change 'the practical and sacramental demands placed on priests… [and] illuminate how the sacred domain is regulated and constructed' (Page, 2011, p.92). Emma Percy (2003, 2014) brings the experience of ordained women like herself to influence the practice of ministry, challenging androcentric perspectives by proposing mothering as a model for pastoral ministry. Although CMC women feature in these studies, they are not a primary focus on a scale that would illuminate distinctions between CMC and other ordained women. In addition, CMC men might enjoy a similar role as traditional male clergy whose wives are not ordained, but it is not known how CMC status affects their

treatment or perception by others, the trajectory of their ministry lives or how they and CMC women understand their ministries and family lives.

Pervading Power

Power is a pervasive and subtle theme in CMC studies and evident in the research data at the heart of this thesis. Rallings and Pratto (1984) mention the unacknowledged presence of competition between spouses. Sigmon and Sigmon (2001) identify the risk of manipulative triangulation by congregation members of CMC co-pastors and the asymmetry that lies at the heart of thinking about power that pervades feminist understandings of clergy life and work. Martyn Percy (2006) introduces an 'ecology of power' for practice, and uses it to analyse the dynamics of church communities and leadership. Percy applies Stuart Clegg's (1989) understanding of power as a structure of circuits in which power is not an objective force but part of organisational systems. In this thesis I take Percy's concept and extend it into the 'ecosystem of power' by developing the model of an interwoven, interdependent system of elements that interact with each other similar to an ecosystem in the natural world. In so doing I connect to the practical theological concept of the living human web (Miller-McLemore, 1993, 2008, 2018; Couture, 1996; Graham, 2009) in which individuals are understood in the context of their wider social and political relationships. Lee (1988, 1995) places clergy within a 'social ecology' while in Osmer's web of life (2008) (after Fritjof Capra, 1997) the inter-human web is spread even wider to include the integration of all human interaction within their natural, social and spiritual contexts. I argue that the ministry lives of CMC in the Church of England are found within relationships characterised by power of different sorts and strengths. Drawing on Rollo May (1972), power is expressed in various ways, with either negative or positive effect as well as that (like competition) which can have beneficent or detrimental effects. In my analysis of CMC ministry patterns I liken aspects of the CMC ecosystem of power in the church to relationships within natural ecosystems such as predation, symbiosis/mutualism and competition. Timeline interviews with CMC show their ministries as being vulnerable to the institution of the church through policies and practice and also influenced by family and other needs and responsibilities. In addition CMC

exercise their own direction through priorities that they espouse and choices they make as a result.

Responding to the Research Gap

In the light of existing knowledge of Church of England CMC marriages and CMC ministry in non-British settings, the timeline interview study central to this thesis responds to the research imperative to develop understanding about CMC ministry over the course of their lives. I contextualise the growing cohort of CMC in the Church of England within their settings and networks through the concept of an ecosystem of power and argue that CMC ministry patterns are formed over time by the effect of its diverse range of elements and forces. CMC deserve research attention because of their growth in number and influence in the ministerial life of the church and how their position illuminates issues of power and vulnerability in the church with the potential to illuminate wider clergy experience. The present research increases understanding about this group of clergy with the aim of improving good practice for CMC and those working with them in their deployment, management and pastoral care.

Thesis Overview

Following this introduction that establishes the need to research CMC ministry patterns in the Church of England, chapter two outlines my methodology and the influence on my research of both my position as a former CMC and a critical realist epistemology. I explain why it was particularly appropriate to develop the use of interviews structured by constructing a timeline by which I could cover the whole period of CMC couples' ministry lives. This method created layers of data in quantitative form from analysing the timelines supplementing the qualitative data from participants' interview transcripts. Chapter three explains the theoretical basis of the thesis in terms of the conceptual approach of an ecosystem of power. I develop the practical theological notion of the living human web (Miller-McLemore, 1993, 2008, 2018; Graham, 2009) and draw on Martyn Percy's ecology of power (2006), Stuart Clegg's (1989) circuits of power and Rollo May's (1972) typology of power in order to understand CMC ministries over time.

In chapter four I demonstrate from the research results how CMC are vulnerable to elements of the ecosystem of power that have greater power than them, arguing that CMC are constrained by policies of the national church and practices of senior clergy that vary between dioceses. I contend that when such forces preclude CMC ministry in an area they are effectively predatory to CMC ministry. Family needs and expectations create additional influence on CMC ministry choices. I show how CMC experience greater vulnerability because both members of the couple are engaged with the same institution. Vulnerability also fluctuates over time, with especially high levels at the start of their ministry lives when authoritative forces combine to direct CMC patterns of ministry through the processes of selection, training and appointments. However, vulnerability is evident at all stages through, for example, policies and practice regarding remuneration and housing. In chapter five I show how CMC are able to contribute to their own ministry patterns by adhering to particular operant models of marriage and ministry. Accordingly couples respond to the limitations of their situations and opportunities available to them through ministries that are 'independent', 'tangential' or 'integrated' in relation to each other. Such tactics in the face of more powerful forces (de Certeau, 1984) enable CMC to influence the direction of their ministries throughout their ministry lives. I argue that this is redolent of the commensalism in natural ecosystems where weak elements are able to thrive through mutualism and the restraint of more powerful forces whereby diverse elements of ecosystems contribute to each other's wellbeing and survival in symbiotic relationship.

In chapter six I argue that the distinctive dyadic aspect of CMC ministry echoes mutuality and competition in natural ecosystems. This is illustrated by the support that CMC partners offer each other, which further influences ministry patterns over time. I posit that intra-dyadic competition can have an unexpectedly beneficial effect for CMC in highlighting the asymmetry of power between partners, especially where there are limited resources at various times throughout their ministry lives. How CMC choose to prioritise their respective ministries underlies their ministry decisions overtly or discreetly, often responding to financial requirements and changing personal and family needs over time. In chapter seven I summarise the thesis. I make recommendations for

potential future research in the field in light of the limitations of this study and suggest developments in good practice for CMC and those working with them.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Methods for CMC Enquiry

> An approach to the study of human lives in the context of social change must be able to conceptualize the person, or personality, and the structural aspects of the social environment, within a dynamic framework that incorporates… possibilities of change. (Alwin, 1995 p.254)

Life course scholar Alwin (1995) argues that understanding human lives (in his case their psychological development) should take into account not only the static context of social networks or ecologies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) but also changes over time. CMC ministries in the Church of England are not fixed: over the course of their ministry lives CMC engage in various types of ministry and levels of engagement in ministry. The purpose of this study is to discover why these changes occur and what factors affect CMC in their ministry decisions over time. In this chapter I demonstrate how my use of timeline interviewing leads to a greater understanding of the social ecology within which CMC exist and to the conclusion that the patterns of ministry over time are characterised by CMC's position within an ecosystems of power.

After summarising my epistemological position and my approach as a researcher drawing on the critical realist tradition I explain the development and method of structuring interviews with a timeline, showing why this is a worthwhile method to employ. I chart the processes of sampling and the characteristics of the sample and I outline the ethical considerations of confidentiality, identifiability, and vulnerability in the research project. Finally, I describe the processes of the fieldwork and analysis of data to show how the research question was addressed in practice, before considering the potential for timeline interviewing for practical theologians.

From Where I Stand

A Researcher Resourced by Critical Realism

This project draws on a number of key concepts from the critical realist position that, with their concomitant implications, are foundational to my

approach. Informed by its origins as a philosophy of science by Bhaskar (1975, 1986), others such as Sayer (2000; 2010), Edwards, O'Mahoney and Vincent (2014) and Hurrell (2014), have further developed and applied the approach in the social sciences. I utilise five critical realist principles in particular: the existence of an observable reality, connectedness between different elements of the social world, the complexity of systems and relationships over time, developing new theories rather than searching for generalizable principles and the transformative potential of research.

First, for critical realists, "the world exists independently of our knowledge of it" (Sayer, 2010, p. 4). The 'real' world is "whatever exists", the "realm of objects, their structures and powers" (Sayer, 2000, p.11).[9] This may be very different from our experience of the world (the 'empirical'), while the 'actual' is what happens when any of those powers are activated (Sayer, 2000, p.12) and come into play. In practical terms this means that researchers can use a variety of appropriate means to study social phenomena and to map and understand their elements. A reliable understanding of the extent of CMC ministry in the Church of England, for example, can be achieved through quantitative research on their numbers and ministry, as I demonstrate elsewhere (Collingridge, 2015), and useful preliminary conclusions drawn from that data. Equally, conversations with CMC and the accompanying timelines can be used to elicit deeper understanding of CMC ministry from the perspective of the individuals, not only with regard to the chronology of their ministries, but the conditions and events that influenced the decisions that were made.

While much critical realist research centres on qualitative methods, as Hurrell notes, (2014) "[critical realism] does not engage in methodological imperialism, recognizing the role of both quantity and quality within social research" (p.244). Critical realist research is not intended exclusively to comprise

[9] Sayer's use of 'powers' to mean the properties and capabilities of an entity to act or affect others is not to be confused with other concepts of power that I address elsewhere.

one specific method, like a recipe to be followed expecting a standardised outcome, regardless of the context (Sayer, 2000, p. 19). Rather,

> combining extensive and intensive approaches provides the best of both worlds. Such combinations can highlight widespread phenomena of interest, drill down to explain *why* these may, or may not, have occurred in particular contexts, and provide depth not attainable through quantitative procedures alone. (Hurrell, 2014, p.2)

The needs of this research project led to different methods to be employed at different stages (Osmer, 2008). Thus, in Sayer's (2000) terms, where *extensive* research establishes the extent and nature of the research area, *intensive* research investigates in greater depth. Following initial extensive research to establish the reach and nature of CMC ministry patterns (e.g. Collingridge, 2015) I turned to an intensive research phase to study particular CMC with regard to their motivations and the factors at work over time in their decisions about their ministry patterns.

The existence of an observable reality also highlights the importance of critical distance (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007) that allows the researcher to contribute to an assessment of what they study. As Sayer asserts: "Social science must be critical of its object. In order to be able to explain and understand social phenomena we have to evaluate them critically" (Sayer, 2010, p.4). This is not to say that the researcher has a privileged moral position from which to judge; to avoid that risk it is essential at all stages to retain a high degree of reflexivity (Knott, 2005). However it is the researcher's responsibility to stand apart from existing understanding in order to see, to extend and to communicate important developments in the field of knowledge.

The second principle of critical realist thought that I apply to my project is a commitment to the connectedness within, across and between different elements of the social world. In critical realism this connectedness is understood in a layered form: "The world is differentiated and stratified, consisting not only of events, but objects, including structures, which have powers and liabilities capable of generating events" (Sayer, 2010, p.4). Atomised study of individual CMC would have serious limitations in isolation of the wider context

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979). CMC lives and work are enmeshed in the complex institution of the Church of England so an essential element of the research has been to understand the ministries of CMC in the contexts of their family and personal lives on one hand and their local and wider ministry contexts on the other (Percy, 2006). Interviews with CMC indicate that their ministry patterns develop in the context of intricate networks of individual and institutional relationships.

Thirdly, I align with the critical realist treatment of the complexity of systems and relationships over time, including the impact of variation in conditions acting on them (Sayer, 2000, p.15). Inviting CMC to reflect retrospectively on their lives and ministries attempts to capture not just the features of ministry at a single moment in time, but to add a retrospective element through which to comprehend changes to their situations over time and the factors which that affected them at different junctures. Similarly, in her longitudinal North American research, Nesbitt (1997) studies the effect of women's ordination in Episcopalian and Unitarian churches through both qualitative interviews and quantitative statistical data. In assessing the gendered impact of a rise in the number of ordained women (contradicting the myth that this increase is the cause of decline in opportunities for male clergy) Nesbitt provides an understanding of ministry that includes changes and developments over the course of ministry lives, tracking career stages of preparation, entry, advancement, maintenance and decline (p.95). Given the variation of ministry engaged in by CMC compared to other clergy (Collingridge, 2015), a similarly chronological element illuminates why CMC choose particular ministries at different times.

Fourthly, in common with critical realism I extend the application of research by developing new theories rather than searching for generalizable principles: "A successful realist study … involves a reconceptualization of the subject and the processes in which it is connected" (Edwards, O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014, p.19). Research based on critical realist principles tends to be iterative, with constant movement between the empirical and the real. Researchers start the process without necessarily having a commitment to one

particular theoretical explanation for a phenomenon. Neither deduction nor induction are used in their conclusions, but the adding of "theory to data" (Edwards et al., p. 18) through processes of 'abduction' and 'retroduction', whereby abduction combines observation and theory/literature to explain 'the mechanisms that caused the events' (Edwards et al., p.17) by examining patterns of events in the social world. Meanwhile, retroduction considers the nature of the wider context giving rise to those causal mechanisms, often by comparing patterns of events over time and in different settings.

Finally, research has the potential to make a positive impact on the world. Bhaskar speaks in terms of the possibility of emancipation (Bhaskar, 1986; Sayer, 2000), such as might occur if women in a patriarchal society were helped to understand gender difference as being contested. This aim concurs with Swinton and Mowat's (2016) goal of practical theology as "ensuring faithful and transformative practice" (p.24). For CMC this is an important principle for the sake of the flourishing of individual CMC and their families and for the fruitfulness of the mission and ministry of the church, "ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world" (Swinton and Mowat, 2016, p.7).

In line with Osmer's (2008) descriptive-empirical task to discover "what is going on…[by] gathering information that helps us discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations or contexts" (p.4) and prioritising the nature of the problem to be investigated (Sayer 2000, p. 19), I crafted a method to research CMC ministries over time. While the primary model of research in practical theology has normally been qualitative (e.g. Graham, Walton and Ward, 2005), my intention has been to take seriously both a broad empirical understanding of the situation of CMC within the institution of the Church of England and also a rich conception of the factors affecting individual CMC lives and ministries. Thus I recognised the limitations of employing either purely quantitative or solely qualitative models for this purpose. Critical realist Scott Hurell (2014) and sociologist Jennifer Mason (2006) separately make the case for combining quantitative and qualitative methods in social research to enhance the creativity and quality available through qualitative methodologies alone.

Theorization is thereby not limited to "the micro-macro divide" but "it is ultimately more helpful to think in terms of multi-dimensional research strategies that transcend or even subvert the so-called qualitative-quantitative divide" by bringing together different types of research through "meshing or linking [rather] than integrating data and method" (Mason, p.9). In my research this has been achieved by combining CMC's timeline construction with hearing CMC voices through interviews structured by those timelines. In this way, I have gained a full and well-contextualised picture of the complexities of CMC lives and ministry patterns through using quantitative methods to enhance qualitative data, meshing together a range of suitable approaches at each stage (Silverman, 2013; Mason, 2002).

A Researcher Formerly CMC

Bhaskar (1975) notes that as social beings we benefit from some level of 'internal access' to social phenomena through generic human experiences as actors in our social worlds. The commonality of my experience with CMC rests in my former status as part of that group, during the early period of CMC in the Church of England that began when women were first ordained deacons in 1987 (General Synod, 1986). For twenty years after my ordination in 1988 I was married to a fellow clergyperson and, like many other CMC (Collingridge, 2015), my ministry career during that time was varied. I ministered in diverse settings and switched between periods of stipendiary (paid) and non-stipendiary/self-supporting ministry according to family and personal circumstances, the constraints and opportunities of diocesan practices, and geographical location in relation to networks of social support (Kieren and Munro, 1989). I experienced the creative collegiality and mutual support of CMC life (Walrond-Skinner, 1998) as well as restrictions of the institutional church as a female deacon. I saw my husband being ordained as priest five years before the women were made priests in 1994, and indeed I experienced several months delay to my priesting until my baby daughter was weaned amidst diocesan discomfort at the prospect of a nursing mother and baby on the ordination retreat. This engagement with the diverse issues and experiences of CMC and my continuing Church of England ministry creates resonance with practitioner researchers who

> are surrounded by people who have vested interests in the research. In traditional research relationships the researcher engages with the field only during the research. For the practitioner, engagement occurs before, during and after research. The practitioner researcher has the benefit of a deep understanding of the field, but also has to work with the consequences of the research. We regard this as a strong point of practitioner research. Living with the consequences of research makes practitioner researchers more conscientious about values in relation to current research participants and the future impact of their work.
> (Fox, Martin and Green, 2007, p.197)

Reflecting on my own position was valuable in advance of the interviewing process. A high level of open reflexivity was the key to retaining the essential critical distance, because "what really matters is that we know where and who we are, in relation to what, how and why we research" (Aston, Cornish and Joyce, 2015, para 2). There are risks of familiarity with a research group (Knott, 2005; Cameron & Duce, 2013) in making false assumptions based on one's own experience, failing to notice differences in the lives of others, or colluding with participants in addressing, or failing to address, particular issues. Having been socialised into an organisation and taken on its epistemological perspective, and also sharing the experience of those working within the organisation, researchers can be "perceived to be prone to charges of being too close, and thereby, not attaining the distance and objectivity deemed to be necessary for valid research" (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007, p. 60). From his field of Daoist studies, Komjathy (2016) proposes the Möbius strip as a model for including both critical adherents and scholar-practitioners in the study of religion because of its "continuous surface with apparently different sides that may be non-orientable (…inconsistent and indeterminate)" (p.320). During all stages of the research I endeavoured to maintain my awareness of the commonalities and differences between my own experience as former CMC on one hand and that of the participants on the other. In practice my shared experience with CMC proved to be an asset through the level of understanding I was able to offer in our structured conversations, aiming above all to value and honour the lives that CMC brought throughout the research process. I was able to

appreciate, for example, the joys and frustrations of CMC as parents of young children juggling the demands of ministry and home and the ministry opportunities and restrictions as children develop to need less practical care but more emotional support. However, my decision with my then husband that one parent would be non-stipendiary until the children were at school was different from many participants who prefer (or need) for both parents to remain in full- or part-time paid ministry throughout. Ultimately my determination was that the research task should be conducted with rigour, with the aim of improving good practice for CMC in the Church of England (Swinton and Mowat, 2016).

CMC Ministries Under Enquiry

At this stage of establishing knowledge about the growing cohort of CMC in Britain the most urgent need for research is into the reasons for CMC ministry patterns through their lives, addressed through qualitative research:

> Qualitative researchers… seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning. In contrast, quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 8)

Such research requires an adaptable method of eliciting data about CMCs in their current situation that also includes a retrospective element to cover periods of CMC lives which, for some, extend over many years (cf. Nesbitt, 1997). The interviewing method needs to be adaptable for a variety of situations and time-scales. Open-ended interviews facilitate extempore individual response, yet, as John Clausen (1998) observes, spontaneous "life reviews tend to be fragmentary" (p.192) and would take longer than I was able to invest as a lone researcher. Through timeline interviewing, however, I could structure interviews so that CMC could talk about a complex interplay of factors and features in an individual way, yet with adequate commonality for meaningful analytic comparisons.

Developing Timeline Interviews

In order to investigate the reasons behind CMC ministry patterns over the course of their ministry lives, my qualitative research method needed to reach beyond the snap-shot of participants' experience at a particular moment. As

existing practical theological methods did not enable me to achieve this, I drew on my professional practice as a priest to innovate *timeline interviewing*, adapted for practical theological research. In personal discipleship training and reflection I have used a method of inviting individuals to draw a retrospective timeline. In pastoral practice this technique enables people not only to recall and identify particular events and experiences, but also to reflect on and appreciate patterns of spiritual growth and challenge over time, sometimes with a new sense of perspective or even wonder as they see how various elements might relate to each other and, potentially, to the action of God. With the focus of my research investigation on the changes, turning points and contributing factors to CMC decisions over time, I structured qualitative interviews by inviting participants to construct a timeline of their life in ordained ministry. Historians have long used timelines to understand the chronology and meaning of past events by representing them in graphic form; in the communication of socially constructed memories and perceptions of time (Zerabuvel, 2003) the line is a pervasive feature in human efforts to comprehend historical events, both overtly and figuratively. Globally, historians have been drawn to the representation of genealogy and chronicle, as "powerful, graphically dense ways of describing and interpreting the past" (Rosenberg and Grafton, 2010, p.13). The construction of a timeline formed the structure of each interview with CMC and provided an accessible way of portraying the complex interplay of events and factors, revealing, for example, the ages and school years of children at the point of each job change when CMC coordinate moves with children's school changes. This revealed the chronology and coherence of different events as well as providing a measurable way of calculating the length of time spent in different ministries, caring for children and time out of ministry. Timeline construction also gave a way for CMC themselves to form, and view, a visual representation of their ministry careers as a whole, offering participants the possibility to gain insights from the perspective provided. Timelines have great potential in practical theological research, then, not only to give visual representation of chronological occurrences and changes but also to help participants and researchers to develop understanding of past events.

Life course scholars have found that using a life chart (prepared in advance by the participant) during an interview allows the researcher to "probe into … issues and the reasons underlying major fluctuations" and "a degree of structure [to the interview] is afforded by the participant's own lifeline" (Clausen, 1998, p.202). In practical theology life stories feature through, for example, the value of narrative formation of identity where older adults are invited to reflect on past events for their spiritual wellbeing through making sense of what has happened in the past (Ganzevoort and Bouwer, 2007; Ganzevoort, 2011). While the retrospective aspect of such narrative process cohered with my project, the construction of individual identity was less pertinent to my research purpose than was the broader aim of developing a picture of CMC ministry through accounts of their patterns of ministry formed over the course of their lives to date and an understanding of factors leading to their decisions.

The pervasiveness of the visual in people's lives makes visual elements especially pertinent to social researchers: "Just as images inspire conversations, conversations may involve images; conversation visualizes and draws absent printed or electronic images into its narratives through verbal descriptions and references to them" (Pink, 2006, p. 21). Visual methods in general (including photographs, videos or artefacts) may be prepared in advance by researchers to stimulate participants during interviews or else constructed by participants for discussion with researchers in rich, multi-modal approaches (Reavey and Prosser, 2012). Yip, Keenan and Page (2011) and Dunlop and Ward (2012) use participant-led photographic methods with young people in Britain. Dunlop and Ward invited Polish young people to photograph their understanding of the sacred, while Yip, et al. asked participants to make video diaries about their faith and sexual lives. The visual element of both projects provides additional layers to verbal or written data and greater agency to participants, with Yip et al.'s participants able to have full control of content of their spoken contributions on video as well as the visual context. In contrast, because my intention was to compare chronology and features from timelines I co-created timelines with participants within a conventional interview setting. Nevertheless, this method revealed what could otherwise have remained invisible. Inviting participants to

prepare timelines in advance of interviewing could develop the method for shorter interviews and greater participant involvement and creativity, albeit with the risk of reducing potential for comparisons.

Contextualisation of human lives within social and institutional networks is also captured by practitioners in visual, diagrammatic form such as ecomaps (Rickert and Rettig, 2008)[10]. Researchers use ecomaps to record interview content or as tools during interviews to encourage participants to talk and engage with the interview process.[11] The construction of timelines during my interviews similarly allowed CMC's full engagement with the interview, resulting in greater equity between participant and researcher than is possible in many other interview methods (King, Horrocks and Brooks, 2019). Rather than simply portraying how uncontentious events relate to one another over time, there is a constructive element in how individuals comprehend events that are depicted. Similarly, I was interested in the timeline both as a representation or presentation of data in my research process and as a way of constructing data. Through timeline construction participants became more deeply involved in the research process. As ethnographer Sarah Pink (2013) argues, visual methodologies contribute to "a more engaged, participatory, collaborative and public form of visual scholarship" (p.5). CMC participants showed this by the particular elements in their professional, personal and family lives they chose to include on their timelines, helping identify elements important to the development of their ministry patterns. Meanwhile the interview conversation helped participants specify how those events were important to the development of their ministry patterns.

Timelines provide a structure for CMC to convey complex information and perspectives, often covering many years in a relatively short interview of 60-120 minutes (Adriansen, 2012). CMC included experiences, events and factors of

[10] See also Hartman, A. (1978). Diagrammatic assessment of family relationships. *Social casework*, *59*(8), 465-476.

[11] See for example Washington's (2009) study of the experience of those caring for disabled children.

importance to them on their timelines, such as selection for ministry, training and ordinations, changes in jobs, the birth of children, illnesses, deaths of family members and other pertinent occurrences affecting their ministry decisions. For Sonya Sharma (2015), researching how (Christian) faith affects intimacy between sisters, timelines assist "in tracing chronological moments by which religion and the women's relationships with their sisters were more or less prominent" and "a visual tool to aid understanding the women's biographies over the life course" (p.5). Employed once the interview was well under way Sharma's timelines were not the primary framework for interviewing but illuminated aspects of the subject beyond words alone. Although Adriansen (2012) asserts that the level of equity between researcher and participant makes timelines unsuitable for interviewing elites I found the method equally effective for interviewing senior clergy as with other CMC, perhaps through extensive previous contact with Church of England dignitaries. For me timelines functioned in two ways: firstly, by providing an engaging and adaptable skeletal structure for the interviews in which participants could tell me about many years of life-experience in a single interview and, secondly, by constructing a further layer of data for analysis and reflection alongside the interviews. This development of using timelines in practical theology offers potential for future researchers, not only in narrative theology, but any research (or practice) that seeks insights into changes over time.

Purposive Sampling: a Diverse Group

In order to achieve a diverse sample through which to investigate a range of CMC experiences and ministry patterns I utilised a purposive sampling method (Mason, 2002). In this approach, "participants are selected … on the basis of a particular characteristic or identified variable … [to gain] insight and understanding by hearing from representatives from a target population" (Gilbert, 2008, p. 511-12). I thus sought a sample encompassing CMC of different ages and stages of ministry across a range of dioceses and engaged in diverse ministries. I achieved this by using a list of individual CMC that I had compiled during my previous quantitative research from publicly available details in *Crockford's Clerical Directory* (Crockford, 2013; Crockford, online). The list included biographical information indicating date of birth, education,

place of training and dates of ordination, positions held (past and present) as well as contact information. Supplemented by a career biography approach studying clergy ministry lives through their different stages (Nesbitt, 1997, p.35) I thus ensured a diverse sample whereby CMC in chaplaincy, diocesan or other non-parochial roles could be adequately represented, alongside diversity in characteristics such as age, length of time ordained, and relative seniority of male and female partners.

I had direct contact with CMC around the country who could have formed the core of my participant group, drawn from those with whom I had trained for ministry, friends and colleagues from my 25 years of activity in the Church of England across the country. However, the snowball sampling method (Gilbert, 2008), asking those I knew to introduce me to further contacts could have restricted the sample to clergy of similar ages, types of ministry context, training (e.g. residential/non-residential) and church tradition to each other and myself, thus causing imbalance and creating gaps in the research. This was potentially critical given earlier findings (Collingridge, 2015) that CMC are more likely to be engaged in non-parochial roles which could be a strategy for managing high levels of absorptiveness and boundary enmeshment (Kieren and Munro, 1988) and therefore affect ministry patterns.

Thus, while I began my interviewing with pilot interviews with two CMC individuals whom I already knew, I quickly progressed to approaching other potential participants selected in a purposive manner from ,my existing list of CMC names to achieve a diverse sample (Mason, 2002). True to my intention of adapting my research methods according to the needs of the research, an element of snowball sampling did occur in the later stages, however, where there was an obvious gap in the sample and I was told of potential participants by others to complete the cohort.

Individuals rather than couples.

Walrond-Skinner's (1998) focus on the marriage relationships of CMC and her experience as a marriage counsellor meant that it was particularly appropriate for her to interview participants in couples. Similarly Jean Burton's

family therapist experience (Burton and Burton, 2009) allowed her to research stress in clergy families through interviews with family groups alongside her ordained husband, Chris. Their team approach maintained engagement, especially with young children in a way that I as a lone researcher could not achieve. As I am not a trained counsellor there was the potential for complexities from interpersonal dynamics if I interviewed couples or families. Indeed I was interested in how being married to fellow clergy affects ministry choices rather than CMC marriage relationships. Although there was a slight risk of hearing an incomplete account from just one of a CMC dyad, I judged that the commonalities would be greater than the differences, especially with the relatively fact-based structure of timeline interviews. In her research with Church of England clergy and their spouses Page (2010; 2011; 2016a) also interviewed separate individuals to avoid skewing the results by over-emphasising the experience of particular participant families. Similarly for me, interviewing individual participants rather than both members of a couple increased my reach, enabling a greater number of dyads to be included. From a practical perspective, too, finding time for an interview in the busy diary of one CMC partner was a much simpler task than attempting to reach both at the same time.

In practice, as most of the interviews were held in the Vicarage or home of the participants, the other partner was sometimes in the house and I was able to meet them. Indeed, they were occasionally called on to supply or confirm details of dates or the order of events during the course of interviews. In one case, both partners were present in the interview, due to their situation and the layout of the house; conversation with both members of the a couple on my arrival led into the interview itself and I decided not to ask the second partner to leave. Just one partner (chosen by the couple) made the timeline and was the specified participant in terms of the make-up of the sample. This instance created an interesting opportunity for comparison with other interviews. In this case there were no substantial features that were evident to render the interview data content incomparable to others, but the process was more extended. I concluded that interviewing couples could have been a viable option from the point of view of producing a suitable interview and timeline, but that in addition to the complexities of organising for both partners to meet me for the time that would

be needed (especially if their ministry contexts were different), the cumulative time required in interviewing, transcribing and analysis could have been prohibitive.

Geographical spread across dioceses.

I knew from my own experience, and that of others, that diocesan practices can be critical to the nature of the experience of CMC: from selection for ministry through finding suitable posts, to general levels of support, methods of working can vary greatly between dioceses. In some cases, dioceses have been known to have particular policies in relation to CMC, and in many more their practices could indirectly prove either encouraging or dissuasive to CMC flourishing in particular areas (e.g. Diocese of Sheffield, 1988). It was important, therefore, to ensure that participants were from a diverse selection of dioceses, within the range of feasibility for a lone researcher. Therefore I contacted CMC from the several different dioceses within reach of my home by car. I also included other areas easily accessed from the homes of family members where I could stay or were on routes I was taking around the country for other reasons. In this way, I could find CMC ministering in eight dioceses in the provinces of both Canterbury (south) and York (north). Between them, they brought the experience of having been either sponsored by or serving in a total of 20 of the total of 42 Church of England dioceses during the course of their ministries.

Gender and age balance, experience as CMC.

The research sample comprised 7 male and 8 female clergy, with an average age at interview of 49.8 (women: 45.6; men: 54), the youngest was 29 and the oldest 67 years old. The ages at which they had been ordained averaged 29.5 years (women: 31.5; men: 27), ranging between 25 and 55 years old. Between them, the participants had been CMC for a total of 196 years, ranging from 2 to 33, with an average of 13 years experience. The group comprised 1.3% of all ministerially active CMC.

Nature of ministry.

At the time of interview eight participants were incumbents (one part-time), one was assistant clergy, two were senior staff, three were in sector or

other non-parochial ministry and one was retired (see Figure 2.1). To establish a broad sample, I also considered the ministries of the spouses (Figure 2.2), within which group there were eight incumbents (one part-time), two assistant clergy, three in sector/non-parochial roles, and one who was retired.

Figure 2.1 – Type of ministry of participants at time of interview

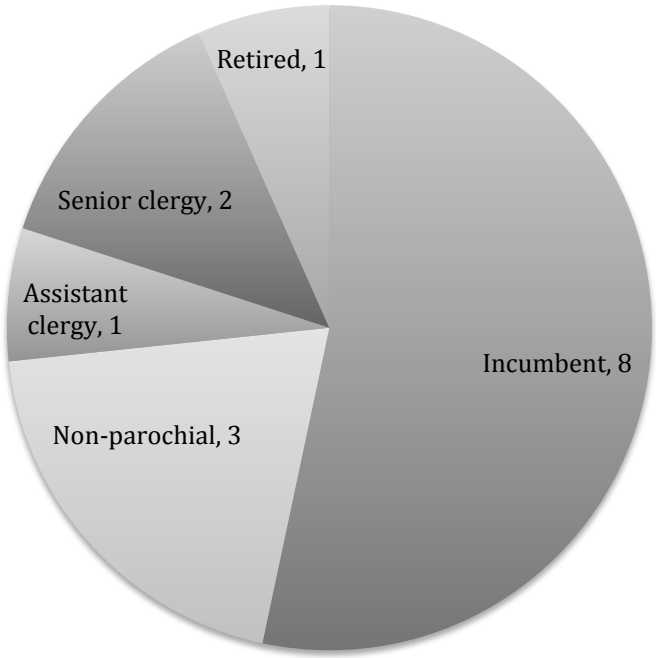
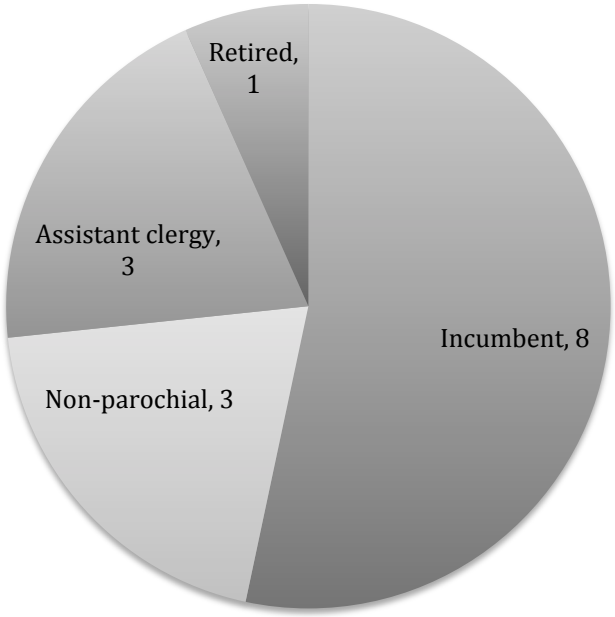


Figure 2.2 – Type of ministry of participants' spouses at time of interview



For the purposes of their research, Peyton and Gatrell (2013) limited their

sample to clergy with a considerable level of experience in ministry by focussing on those who held (voluntary) positions of management responsibility as area/rural deans. However, I wanted to explore whether the situation of CMC changed over time and whether experiences varied between those in the early and later years of ministry, including whether different diocesan practices (for instance in selection, training and first posts) affected CMC at different times. I strove to ensure, therefore, that I included participants of different ages and stages of life and ministry.

I have previously argued (Collingridge, 2015) that CMC women are more likely than their peers to hold senior posts, a group that includes residentiary canons in cathedrals, cathedral deans, archdeacons and bishops. This was particularly of interest as, since that initial study, a number of the first female bishops appointed are CMC. I therefore ensured that senior women and male clergy were part of my project. The sample of 15 individual male and female CMC (plus their spouses, making a total of 30) was therefore able to yield a very extensive and rich level of data based on an amount of experience, a spread of dioceses, life-stages, church traditions and ministry settings far beyond my initial expectations.

Ethical Considerations: Confidentiality, Identifiability and Vulnerability

While there are at least 1160 CMC in active ministry in the Church of England (Collingridge, 2015), there are reasons why they are easily identifiable to others, which in turn creates particular sensitivities in conducting research with them, and focuses the need to be alert to their needs of privacy and confidentiality. Indeed, as Sánchez-Jankowski (2002) asserts with reference to participant-observation, "the issue of being responsible must not be trivialized…. It is important that [the] research protect the participants' anonymity and confidentiality" (p.153). Approval from the University's ethics committee for the research project was sought and granted before I began interviewing. Retaining CMC participants' anonymity is vital as clergy lives are generally conducted in semi-public settings (Friedman, 1985; Lee and Balswick, 1989; Walrond-Skinner, 1998; Burton and Burton, 2009; Page, 2016a, 2016b) due to the high-profile roles they inhabit in their communities. As holders of public office, their

lives can be of particular interest to the community. Many clergy appear in the local press and news websites at the beginning and end of a specific ministry, for example, and when taking part in activities of interest to the community. They may seek publicity for events relating to their work through the news media and may also have a relatively high profile presence on social media. As CMC are less common than other clergy, not only may they attract additional interest, but also they are potentially more easily identified through such details as their geographical location, combination of ministries and number of children. The smaller number of CMC in more senior or unusual posts would potentially be even more identifiable.

Clergy are additionally exposed when living in housing supplied by the parish or other ministry setting that may be located prominently. Church members and wider public often have awareness of and access to the home through the address of the parsonage being published, as well as social events, pastoral and business meetings being held there. These public elements of CMC life mean that individuals, dyads and families are 'scrutinized' by members of church and community (Page, 2016b). Peyton and Gattrel (2013) argue that clergy sometimes choose to blur boundaries between church and home when they perceive the efficacy of their ministry thereby to be enhanced. Regardless of the intention of CMC in their ministries, the fact remains that there was a risk of damage to relationships or of personal or professional embarrassment if, through the research process, an individual participant's identity was to be obvious to friends, family, past or present colleagues, bosses or parishioners.

Literature on interviewing elites distinguishes between 'elites' as specific chosen persons as opposed to respondents chosen at random (Hochschild, 2009) or as individuals of high status (Mikecz, 2012). I use the second definition regarding interviewing senior clergy/dignitaries within the Church of England hierarchy. The literature focuses on methodological problems arising from the inaccessibility of prominent figures as well as the importance of careful preparation by gathering knowledge about the individual's life and background in order to help reduce the differential of influence between interviewer and subject (Mikecz, 2012). However, my approaches to potential participants who

were senior clergy were little different from those to other CMC. Their contact details were almost equally available through public sources (although sometimes contact was mediated by a personal assistant), I utilised the same direct email approach and navigated the complexities of making appointments at mutually convenient times in busy diaries. In this matter it was, perhaps, advantageous to be an 'insider' to church systems in a relatively 'flat' organisation as I was making contact more as a colleague than a stranger. [12] The co-operation and willingness of CMC to give a substantial period of time to being interviewed was very welcome when their time is pressed by multiple responsibilities and commitments. Nevertheless several participants (some in senior roles), while willing to be part of the research and to be open in their conversations during the interview, expressed concern about the possibility of their identities being revealed inadvertently. O'Leary (2004) argues for the importance of such considerations:

> Anonymity goes a step beyond confidentiality and refers to protection against identification from even the researcher. Information, data, and responses that are collected anonymously cannot be identified with a particular respondent. (p.54)

Along with the assurances of anonymity within the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix A), some participants asked for additional assurance and/or sight prior to any publication of any of material from their interviews in which they might be identified. In order to prioritise respect for participants, individuals were offered the chance to withdraw from the research process at any time and to redact or delete any elements of their transcribed interview. A number of interviews were edited after transcription as a result.

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[12] In organisational theory 'flat' organisations have relatively few levels of hierarchy (see for example Porter and Lawler, 1964). Although the Church of England is often considered hierarchical because clear lines of authority and specific positions of power and seniority are well defined, there are relatively few layers within the organisational structure. The result is that communication between the most junior curate and the most senior bishop of a diocese is normally more easily achieved than would be the case in a 'taller' organization with more layers of seniority and management.

In order to maintain anonymity in the presentation of my research, CMC participants are randomly assigned names. The name given to each participant shares an initial with his/her spouse, such as '**Fiona** and Frank' and '**Isla** and Ian'. In the following chapters participants' names appear in **bold** to distinguish them from their spouses, whose names are presented in normal text. This indicates the person who directly engaged with the research process rather than their partner about whom the participant speaks during the course of their interview.

Processes of Fieldwork

Making contact by email, I arranged to interview 15 CMC individuals around the country. Wherever possible, potential participants were sent copies of the Participants' Information Sheet and Consent Form in advance (see Appendices A and B), but I also took two hard copies with me to be read and signed by the participant and by me, with one copy being left with the participant for future reference, and the other, which I took.

The majority of interviews took place in participants' homes, which was generally the vicarage or rectory connected to their ministry and/or that of their spouse. In one case we met at the participant's non-parochial place of work. Often interviews were conducted in the participant's study, surrounded by their books and other tools and resources of parochial ministry. Some were in the living room or kitchen, sometimes with children or spouse nearby, with the occasional interruptions normal to family and clerical life, while the conversations remained private. On occasion interruptions superseded principles of 'comfort' and 'quiet', albeit maintaining 'privacy' throughout (King, Horrocks and Brooks' (2019, p.72). These arrangements assisted the process of interviewing as it gave me an extra depth of appreciation of the person's circumstances and provided further context to the interview (Mann, 2016). Furniture in **Isla**'s spacious study, for example, included a small desk used by her daughter when **Isla** was caring for her child while working.

As a practitioner and practical theologian, interesting similarities emerged between interviewing structured by compiling a timeline on one hand, and

pastoral interviews on the other. In the sensitive process of preparation for taking a funeral, for example, as a minister it is important to understand not just the character and personality of a deceased person but also the story and shape of the life they have lived, in order to respect and represent this in the funeral service. However research interviews are not pastoral encounters and have a different purpose from the priest preparing a funeral, being

> concentrated human encounters that take place between the researcher who is seeking knowledge and the research participant who is willing to share their experience and knowledge. Such encounters are designed to enable the researcher to access and understand the unique meanings, interpretations and perspectives that the participant places on the chosen subject (Swinton and Mowat, 2016, p.60-61).

Interviews generally lasted between 90 and 120 minutes and were recorded using a digital sound recorder. Each interview began with an explanation of the research project (Atkinson, 1998) which had already been outlined in the emailed invitation, and of the method of creating a time-line as we talked. The participant was given a blank sheet of squared paper and a pen or pencil while I explained more about timeline construction. Rather than recommending a specific starting point for the timeline, participants were encouraged to start at a point that made sense to them, to honour their unique, individual situation. For many this point was when they met their spouse, while others chose to begin when they felt called to the ordained ministry, or even when they first came to faith. Alongside the timeline construction, themes that were evident from CMC literature were used as additional prompts to the conversation. This enabled me to discover whether or not particular issues were pertinent to the participants in their ministry lives. Aiming to be a "good guide that can anticipate exactly what needs to happen next" (Atkinson, 1998, p.40), I iteratively revised the list of prompts in order to include matters that had emerged in previous interviews but may not have been present in the literature. Afterwards I made transcriptions and sent them to participants for comment and editing.

Analysing Timeline Interviews

Analysis encompassed both the timelines and transcribed recordings of interviews that together provided a rich source of data for thematic analysis and reflection about the ministries that CMC engaged in over the course of their ministerial life together. As each timeline was unique (I did not provide a template) the analytical process included re-drawing participants' timelines to a standard scale and format and adding any factual information (such as dates or job titles) from *Crockford's Clerical Directory* (Crockford, 2013) that had been omitted during the interview (see Appendix C for an example). Standardising in this way allowed me to compare timelines and extract numerical data from the group data (see Appendix D). For example I could calculate the length of time that each CMC was involved primarily in child-care and compare between male and female CMC (as shown in chapters five and six). I avoided smoothing the 'messiness' of human life (Gabb, 2009) by attending to the interview transcript data that was individual and diverse. Future development of the process could be to provide a skeleton time-line, completed with available ministry data, inviting participants to add personal, family and other elements. Although this may reduce participants' engagement with the timeline process, making it less personalised to each participant, it would have the benefit of enabling immediate comparisons between timelines (they would be on the same scale, for example) and shorten subsequent pre-analysis standardisation.

I coded the transcribed interviews and identified emerging themes thus "breaking down the data and thematizing it in ways that draw out the hidden meanings in the text" (Swinton and Mowat, 2016, p.54). Immersing myself in the data by transcribing manually aided a cumulative familiarity with the content within and between individual interviews that strengthened the process (Cameron and Duce, 2013). Coding up from the diverse transcripts, I identified themes common or notable among participants (Fielding, 2008) and collated comments from participants thematically. Themes included factors directly influencing changes and preferences in CMC ministry roles such as 'children' and 'diocesan support' as well as others affecting CMC ministry lives more generally such as 'finance', 'housing' and 'appointments'. Themes were then cross-referenced to time-line data, enabling the identification of the most important features of CMC

ministry over the course of their careers and crystallisation of the issues that most affected their ministry patterns.

Assessment and Applications of Timeline Interviewing in Practical Theology

Timeline interviewing proved to be an effective and innovative multi-layered method for practical theological enquiry, exceeding my hopes as a suitable research approach. This new method gives structure that allows retrospection about long careers in a concise way and providing triangulation with qualitative data from interviews through the dimension of numerical data. As Creswell (2014) argues, "the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding than either approach alone" (p. 4). More open-ended interviewing, free of the timeline focus, might have encouraged wider-ranging conversation or deeper reflection on a greater diversity of ministry issues. For example, in spite of their theological literacy as clergy, participants rarely mentioned their espoused theological perspectives on CMC ministry or their practices of spiritual disciplines without prompting. Nevertheless the results answered my research question, eliciting substantial data suitable for that purpose, confirming Swinton and Mowat's (2016) observation with regard to multi-method approaches, that '[utilizing] the best of (different) methods, but not necessarily [being] defined by any one of them, may be the most appropriate way forward for the practical theologian" (p.48) for "the chosen method [to] achieve the stated purpose" (p.50).

Used with appropriate introductions to participants to ensure participants' understanding and adequate consistency for analysis, timeline interviewing is useful to practical theologians seeking ways of inviting personal reflection of past events such as religious experiences and aspects of spiritual and personal development through narrative or other approaches, as well as when researching changes in communities. The method may be of particular use for researchers wishing to find a way to compare individuals' varied experiences through a quantitative paradigm alongside qualitative interview data. As mentioned earlier, timelines can also assist pastoral practice to offer new perspectives on the past by plotting and understanding changes and developments over time.
Interdisciplinary studies between practical theologians and life course

researchers (for example in developmental psychology, gerontology, careers and criminology) offer great potential for future research.

Conclusion

Drawing on the critical realist approach (Baskhar, 1986; Sayer, 2000) my research of CMC sought to identify how the individual actions of CMC develop into patterns of ministry over time and what factors contribute to those developments. As a diverse group of 15 individual CMC constructed timelines of their ministry lives, during interviews they talked about how ministry decisions related to other personal and family events as well as the reasons and meanings behind what had happened. The new development of timeline interviews in practical theological method generated both qualitative data (in the form of interview transcriptions) and quantitative data (from timelines) enabling comparison of chosen features of CMC ministries over time. I analysed transcriptions by thematic analysis to identify factors affecting CMC ministry decisions and triangulated the results with timeline data to reveal the nature and extent of various features of CMC ministry patterns. The following chapters show how the research results reveal CMC ministries forming within a complex network of relationships characterised by different forces and influences, identified as an ecosystem of power.

Chapter 3. Ecology And Power: Framing CMC Ministry Lives

In this chapter I advance the theoretical framework of an ecosystem of power through which to understand CMC ministry patterns. The varied experiences of CMC expose a multifaceted social and theological landscape in which power, expressed through authority, forces and influences of various kinds and intensities, acts upon different individuals, groups and organisations. Over time CMC create patterns of ministry reflecting the relationships of power in which they exist. Streams of practical theology attend to contextualisation, notably in the living human web (Miller-McLemore, 1993, 2008, 2018; Graham, 2009) and to power (May, 1972; Percy, 2006; Clegg, 1989), however, the multi-layered and changing dynamics of power relationships through the course of CMC ministry lives require greater intricacy of analysis than either approach provides. I propose that by developing an organic confluence of both aspects, the emergent notion of an ecosystem of power achieves the level of complexity and adaptability over time that is needed for this practical theological task.

From Living Human Web to Ecosystem for CMC

Each clergy person exists within a dynamic web of relationships in their local ministry context and diocese, with family members and close friends as well as the national church. In each case there is a flow of power of different types and intensity throughout the network, as in an ecosystem. Interviews with CMC show, for example, that institutional regulations, stipend arrangements and disciplinary procedures exert an authoritative structured force within which the priest must work, while an archdeacon who encourages their application for an appropriate and challenging new post combines the authority of a senior diocesan manager with opportunities for CMC development and flourishing. Encouraging and practically helpful parents-in-law can exert a positive influence of support that affects how well and how happily priests conduct their ministerial lives. An unsupportive churchwarden may have the opposite effect. Social support systems inform and influence clergy ministry (Kieren and Munro, 1989) while, as Davies and Guest (2007) and Guest (2010) argue, the clergy family proves an

intergenerational conduit through which spiritual capital may be transmitted, profoundly influencing the identity and career choices of its members. This complex intersection of relationships evident in CMC life and ministry indicates that considering individual ministries in isolation risks overlooking factors of importance, particularly when seeking to understand reasons behind their ministry patterns over time.

Studying Human Lives in Context

Models have developed in practical theology and the social sciences that incorporate the diversity of elements in human existence. The now well-established notion in practical theology of the living human web (Miller-McLemore, 1993) is a potential candidate for a model by which to understand CMC ministry patterns, not only in its initial pastoral form but also in the richness of subsequent developments (Miller-McLemore, 2018). The living human web is a contextual conceptualisation of Boisen's (1936) living human document arising from Boisen's experience of mental health treatment and pastoral engagement. Responding to the limitations of applying theological theory to practice, Boisen asserts the value of case studies in which the lived experience and beliefs of individuals are considered a valid focus for study, equal to the attention given to written texts by the academy (Schipani, 2011). Similarly rooted in the pastoral theological tradition, the living human web reaches beyond the characteristics, behaviour and insights of individuals by taking into account the impact of their wider social, religious and cultural contexts in which "genuine care now requires understanding the human document as embedded within an interlocking public web of constructed meaning" (Miller-McLemore, 2018, p.17). In its turn, the living human web has proved fertile ground for pastoral and practical theological development (Miller-McLemore, 2008; 2018), including Pamela Couture's (1996) concern to address the "social ecological" framework of "public and ecclesial policies" (p.95), recognising the relevance of family, economic, health and cultural elements to pastoral care. Clergy can also be seen as situated within a network of social relationships in their personal and ministerial lives. Although the living human web can be applied to understand CMC ministries within their complex relational connections in the Church of

England, ministry lives have a natural fluidity over time that is underdeveloped in this model.

Richard Osmer's (2008) advancement of the web focuses on the ministerial task in a congregational setting. Osmer draws on Capra's (1997) comprehensive notion of the 'web of life' that is motivated by the need for sustainable living for the benefit of future generations. Osmer's ecclesiastical focus emphases the interconnected physical and social universe, introducing an alignment with natural ecological interrelationships to the practical theological paradigm. The web of life leads Osmer to recognise the interconnectedness of ministries as well as seeing the need to understand the wider social situation of congregations, asserting that "practical theological interpretation… is deeply contextual. It thinks in terms of interconnections, relationships and systems" (2008, p.17). Osmer's model (through Capra) not only introduces a greater sense of organic fluctuation that incorporates change over time but also allows for an integration of the spiritual dimension of life.

Other system models in social sciences and practical theology further contribute to my development of the CMC ecosystem. In the family systems model, for example, Friedman (1985) addresses this need for contextualisation by underlining the importance of the human relational context for clergy life and praxis. As a practitioner working with Christian and Jewish leaders Friedman interprets social relationships in familial terms. He contends that clergy should address the emotional processes at work in the congregation in a similar way to within a family setting, with the congregation, in whole or part, functioning as a member of the family. This dynamic is especially complex for CMC because of the potential for triangulation where the congregation seeks to communicate or manipulate through one spouse to the other (Sigmon and Sigmon, 2001).

The impact of clergy's specific ministry contexts on CMC lives underlines the limitations of studying CMC solely in a single dimension (ministry or family for example). Referring to local church settings Lee and Balswick (1989) observe, "parish ministry constitutes a unique environment and… the clergy family cannot be fully understood apart from its relationship to

this environment" (p.17). My research extends to CMC in various ministries and I contend that, to gain an adequate understanding of the full complexity of their interwoven lives (Kieren and Munro, 1988), all CMC in active ministry need to be understood equally with reference to their ministerial and social situations.

A Matter of Time: Change Within the Social Ecosystem

Each of these theorisations moves towards a more comprehensive model for practical theological understanding through conceptualising human lives within social networks. However, none accommodates fully both the longitudinal and organic aspects that are integral to the ecosystem paradigm. While future ecological wellbeing is essential for Capra, consideration of changes over time (e.g. Nesbit, 1997) are not adequately established in Osmer's 'web' in a practical theological context nor in any of the contextual models considered to this point. The web primarily remains a tool for analysing a short-term or even a snapshot situation. The nature of ecosystems, however, is that they are constantly evolving and changing. As a model, therefore, the ecosystem not only allows for the complexity of unlimited elements of different types but also the longitudinal dimension through life-processes. Further, being made up of living organisms and natural features, ecosystems have an organic quality that can incorporate the fluctuations and vagaries of human life necessary for honest practical theological enquiry of individuals, families, groups and institutions as seen in the ministry lives of CMC in the Church of England.

The complexity of the contextual network of clergy is echoed in the model of the natural ecosystem with a dynamic interplay of factors and elements affecting and responding to actions taken by individual clergy. Within the intrinsically sequential field of developmental psychology Bronfenbrenner (1977) instigated study of human development embedded in the context of wider family, community, politics and economics. Life course studies developed from Bronfenbrenner's ecological theories, influencing disciplines as wide-ranging as gerontology, criminology, career studies and anthropology (e.g. Moen, Elder & Lüscher, 1995; Mortimer & Shanahan, 2003; Han & Moen, 1999; Darling, 2007; Adriansen, 2012). As life course scholars recognise, characteristics of natural ecosystems are consistent with those of social ecologies with the individual

organism situated within a complex and stratified system of relationships that fluctuate and change over time. In human terms, each person retains its motivations, individuality and value, while elements of the network hold in a dynamic homeostasis that seeks to rebalance when the equilibrium is disturbed. The contextualisation, fluidity and inter-connectedness of parts of an ecosystem is useful for analysing relationship dynamics for parochial praxis, particularly with regard to roles and expectations for clergy.

The Ecosystem Reality Check

The topology of dynamic connectedness and complexity of the ecological model aids a practical theological mapping of CMC ministries:

> The [ecological] model champions interdependence and interrelationality, stressing the importance of the relations and links between all living things rather than interpreting them atomistically, in isolation from one another. Interdependence and interrelationality, in turn, suggest an ethic built around mutuality, care, liberation, and perhaps love for all other beings. The model embraces community, a common good for all beings, while celebrating difference and highlighting the value of the individual distinct from communal value (Sideris, 2006, p.5).

Yet these aspects remain insufficient to sustain the model's comprehensive application in the social and ecclesial world. Rather than simplifying and romanticising the natural realm (Ruether, 2001), we must apply the rigour of ecological realism to the inquiry.

Alongside contexualisation, the positive or neutral characteristics of commensalism (in which one party is advantaged while another is unaffected) and mutualism (with all positively benefitting), a more comprehensive ecosystem model will also take account of more 'negative' types of relationship. Natural networks, for example, feature elements such as competition, parasitism and even predation all of which have been underused in social research (Sideris, 2006) yet hold potential for the practical theological task, particularly with their implications of asymmetrical power within an ecosystem.

Ecosystems also provide a model through which to understand wider ecclesiological contexts for ministry. In relation to the Roman Catholic Church Gruber (2017) contends that the approach and form of argument within the papal encyclical *o Si'* (The Common Good) echoes its content, offering a change from previous essentialist ecclesiological methods employed by the Vatican, to one in which "church-world relations can be conceived as an eco-system" (p. 807), and that "the call in *Laudato Si'* for an integral ecology can also be understood as teaching about the church" (p.807). In addition, contextualisation and analysis through the ecosystem model not only gives due consideration to the complex subject matter of CMC, it also resonates with a mixed mode critical realist methodology by which the consideration of different aspects of CMC life and ministry can be crystallised (Swinton and Mowat, 2016) to provide depth and perspective. Integral to ecosystems are the power differentials between elements of networks. CMC not only experience life and ministry within an intricate set of relationships, but each of these relationships represents a level of influence. The ecosystem of power therefore establishes itself as a particularly apposite concept where practical theological enquiry requires an awareness of relationships of power over time.

CMC and Power

In a complex hierarchical religious organization with its intricate network of associations, clear relationships of power and authority have direct impact for clergy. This is perhaps seen most clearly in dioceses in the relationship between curate and bishop. A bishop has the power, for example, to send ordination candidates to train for ministry, whether or not they are recommended by the Bishops' Advisory Panel (BAP) that is appointed to select ordinands for the wider church (Ministry Division, 2017). A bishop can agree or refuse to ordain someone once they have trained, and a bishop has the ability, within the constraints of finance and suitable posts available in the diocese, to appoint people to curacies in different places and of different types of role (e.g. full or part-time, in vibrant or struggling parishes). No ordained person can function in

an official capacity without permission from the diocesan bishop.[13] As well as such organisational functions, the effective support, pastoral care, equipping and affirmation for clergy has an equally strong impact on clergy lives. Burton and Burton (2009) found, for example, that effective official response to practical problems, as minor (but with great impact) as a leaking tap made "all the difference" (p.56). Conversely, early in their church careers "families were often bewildered by [a] lack of understanding from parishioners or diocesan staff, and by unrealistic expectations from all sources" (p.62). Their expectations of local and diocesan support were not always met: "Having given up many aspects of their lives for ordination, they had anticipated a response of reciprocal care and concern from within the Church of England as a whole" (p.62). Burton and Burton identify an unresolved dilemma for bishops "trying to provide both discipline and pastoral care" (p.221) exacerbated by time pressures on senior clergy and complicated by variations in practice between dioceses. Senior clergy in the Burtons' study expose the confusion in structures of authority in the Church of England, positing that "no one has authority" (p.215) resulting in the dependency of clergy being "unacknowledged by [senior clergy] in their wish for clergy to be more independent" (p.212). Such complexities of relationship may resist traditional categorisations but ecosystem analysis offers a model that allows for interwoven, fluctuating networks of association that takes into account diverse power relationships.

Where CMC marriage partners are both dependent on the church for work, home and income, they can be particularly vulnerable to that institution (Transformations, 2011). Indeed, CMC may experience the full force of the church's authority in negative or positive ways. This can be seen in specific actions or decisions relating to actual situations as well as in decisions based on the anticipation or fear of potential events, as will be demonstrated later in the thesis. Power, then, can be experienced in direct forms, but also in more subtle ways, such as the different assumptions of how priests should spend their time, as expected by family on one hand and parishioners on the other (Chapman,

[13] Canon C 18 https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/canons-church-england/section-c#b78.

2004). The dynamics of power are also present between partners, which may be in the form of competition as well as positive emotional support and financial provision (Walrond-Skinner, 1998; Kieren & Munro, 1989). The complexity of the web of relationships and the diverse array of strengths and types of influence on CMC can thus be seen as part of an integrated whole, just as in the natural world the different elements of an ecosystem are woven together in symbiotic relationship. The effect of these elements may appear to be collectively positive (e.g. the mutualism of different species aiding each other for their common benefit), or in some measure negative (e.g. the predation of members of one species on another) (Sideris, 2006).

Power in Circuits

The concept of an 'ecology of power' which I develop in terms of the 'ecosystem of power' of CMC is found in Martyn Percy's (2006) application of Stewart Clegg's (1989) model of power to the ecclesiastical world, notably congregational life. Percy proposes the ecology of power to analyse church dynamics in the local congregation: "The local church evolves into a complex ecology of power, where energy of various types can flow through in different ways, be subject to increase and decrease, and be converted and adapted for a variety of purposes" (2006, p.116). For Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips (2006), "power is inseparable from interaction and thus all social institutions potentially are imbued with power" (p.6). Clegg (1989) envisages three levels of power circuit in his analysis of organisations: simple 'episodic power' provides the building blocks of the circuit in which agencies (individuals, groups or other elements) move to achieve outcomes (with resistance from others through action, scarcity of resources etc). Moving into the level of social integration, elements of the system may be modified and moderated by 'dispositional power' including "rules fixing relations of meaning and membership" (1989, p.214). Finally, 'facilitative power' represents the circuit of system integration where the focus is domination (authoritative power) facilitating empowerment and disempowerment. Flow occurs across the levels of the system wherein change in the organisation may occur as a result. Reflective of Clegg, Percy's (1998) analysis of power in charismatic churches suggests that perhaps the best way of understanding agencies in circuits is to see them as a process of power exchange,

or a mechanism, where power is given up or received, or raw material transformed into a type of power (p.11). Clegg's systematised understanding of power incorporates reference to 'ecological' factors. However, their use is generally limited to the effects of competition (survival of the fittest) and sometimes the colonisation of newly available organizational space.[14] In spite of allusion to the ecological paradigm, then, Clegg's approach misses exactly what so many thinkers appreciate about it: its qualities of mutuality, cooperation and holistic integration (Sideris, 2006; Gruber, 2017) as well as its organic nature. The ecosystem model, though, brings these elements together into an integrated model of power relationships.

The notion of a circuit, relying on its reference to the workings of electricity and power in the physical world, coheres with Clegg's theorisation of social, human power as a system. Foucault's claim (1991) was that inquiries such as "the foundation of power in society... etc. [are] not fundamental phenomena. There are only reciprocal relations, and the perpetual gaps between intentions in relation to one another" (p.247). Redolent of this, Clegg understands power not as an entity but a process or system. As he states, "power is not a thing. It is relational" (2014, p.383) and acts on whichever currency (such as knowledge) is being employed by the 'nodes' of organisations and individuals in the circuit (Clegg, 1989). Indeed, for Clegg, power's very invisibility increases its potency as it remains difficult to identify and therefore to resist. Similarly applying imagery of scientific observation of the natural world to power, Foucault (1980) uses the language of capillary action in the circulation of blood. Perhaps a more pertinent simile from the field of the physical sciences, however, is that of forces, whose potential is present within every physical body, but is evident only when the forces are unequal. In both natural ecosystems and human relations, a situation of stasis might hold between two elements of a network while their relative power is the same, but in the event of one becoming relatively more powerful, its force on the other element will be evident. In a similar way, the vulnerability of CMC to actions and decisions of the diocese, for example, will vary over time. At the start of their ministerial careers both partners are reliant on

[14] See Clegg (1989) pp.225-40.

the bishop and other senior staff to support their selection, training, funding and ordination. At later stages, however, perhaps as children leave home and financial pressures reduce, CMC are able to gain power within the ecosystem by being more flexible, such that the incumbency of one partner can provide income and housing for the family while the other resigns from an unsatisfactory post and takes time to find their next position. The effects of power between different elements of the ecosystem of power thus change over time for CMC.

Although Clegg allows for action and resistance by agencies or elements of the power circuit, his model deliberately avoids the 'actor focus' (1989) by which the perspective of the individuals and/or groups is considered and which is a rich primary source in practical theological enquiry (cf. Boisen, 1936). Indeed, this is exemplified in the present study where the endeavour of achieving a full picture of the power dynamics pertinent to CMC ministry patterns would be futile without exploring the very experiences that reveal how those dynamics have effect. Indeed where research approaches utilise simplification (and/or quantification) of complex relationships, qualitative methods reinsert particularity, content, agency and meaning (Crossley, 2010) to show "how social phenomena arise in the interactions of their participants" (Silverman, 2017, p. 9).

Types of Power

Clegg's (1989) organisational perspective and his assertion of power being a conduit enables him to avoid fully addressing the diversity of expressions, types and effects of power. In addition his primary assumption is that power is 'power over' by which one party seeks to affect another and produce particular outcomes. Even given Clegg's theorising of different levels of power in organisations, power exerted by and experienced by individuals and groups in diverse ways and settings is seen in more diverse forms than can be explained by his power circuit model. Rollo May (1972) contributes to a clearer understanding of the range of power dynamics by codifying types of power in relation to the sources of violence, arguing that, essential to wellbeing of individuals and society, "power is the birthright of every human being. It is the source of his [sic] self-esteem and the root of his conviction that he is inter-personally significant" (p.243). May's typology is based on the effects of

particular kinds of power ranging from negative to positive as well as those with potential for either outcome. Exploitative power and manipulative power describe self-serving power over another or others by direct subjection or, more subtly, including when someone's state of mind or weaker position leads them to invite their own subjugation. Competitive power is "power against another" (p.107) which may have positive or negative effect. Even when only minimally acknowledged (Rallings and Pratto, 1984), competition between CMC spouses may be experienced as variously encouraging or hindering, and is a significant element in a codification of power for CMC life (Walrond-Skinner, 1998). Meanwhile May categorises both nutrient and integrative power as positive. Nutrient power is exemplified by a parent's concern for their young child and integrative power is "*with* the other person", disarming a more powerful force by standing alongside others in their weakness (May, 1972, p.109). The application of such a range of forms of power provides the possibility of a nuanced analysis of CMC ministry including not only 'power over' but, as Grenz (1998) argues, also 'power against' and 'power for'. In practice, domiciliary or emotional support from those who care for them, for example, may be equally influential in how CMC develop the shape of their ministries over time as they are by a policy directive from the bishop.

While CMC ministry patterns are influenced and sometimes constrained by the various forces within their social and institutional networks, such as diocesan policies determining whether a couple can work in the same church, or family responsibilities where dependent children need care, they also have the ability to make a range of decisions, often to a considerable extent. They may choose to apply for particular kinds of posts, for example, or to work full- or part-time. They may decide to employ child-care from outside the family or to move near relatives who can support them in practical ways. The 'power to' act that is seen in human social life is critical for CMC making decisions about their ministries. Allen (2016) characterises concepts of power as being divided between those where power is seen as 'power-over' (i.e. the means to alter the actions of another) and 'power-to' (the facility to act). Allen identifies three feminist conceptualisations of power, "as a resource to be (re)distributed, as

domination, and as empowerment." (para 1), and suggests that many feminist thinkers align to power as empowerment rather than the 'power-over' model which they seen as being inherently 'masculinist'. Nancy Hartsock, for example, characterises "the feminist theory of power" "as energy and competence rather than dominance" (Hartsock 1983, p. 224). Conceptualising a range of expressions of power in this way allows refinement in understanding complex social interrelationships of asymmetrical power for CMC within the institution of the church.

Foucauldian analysis might lead us to consider that the individual is subject to the power of the institution to the extent that they become 'docile bodies' (Foucault 1977) and indeed clergy do internalise the requirements and expectations placed on them by the church, as "parish priests feel obliged to govern and self-regulate their bodies in accordance with what they believe is expected by God" (Peyton and Gatrell, 2013, p.55). Page (2016a, 2016b) further argues that while all clergy are subject to high levels of scrutiny, ordained women experience scrutiny to a greater extent, and particularly those with children. For CMC this scrutiny is further amplified, with both partners and their family subject to the same public and institutional gaze. As Shilling (2005) notes, in social theory based on governmentality the body itself came to be treated as "an object that was rendered passive" (p.5). Nevertheless, in any social system there remains potential for individual action and determination. As CMC grapple with competing demands, "personal conviction is fundamental" (Peyton and Gatrell, 2013, p.81) and they have the ability to make choices about their ministries, their home lives and their futures. Individual agency is key not only to our human understanding of ourselves, then, but also, in Margaret Archer's words, "our ability to function as social actors in the world" who need "their reflexivity to know that the associated duties and expectations apply to them" (2003, p.41), and to act on that understanding to the extent that they choose to do so. Peyton and Gatrell (2013) find that in terms of their reflexive self-understanding, clergy "draw upon personal and agential resources to maintain

interior self-discipline because is it their personal sense of 'being ordained' in the service of God, which is their source of order" (p.81). This self-understanding as dedicated priests is expressed in their choices to blur the boundaries between different aspects of their lives as "as a commitment to their vocational faithfulness" (p.81). In practice, then, CMC are not only subject to the authoritative power of more powerful elements in the church and the influence of those important to them but they are also able to determine their own priorities and make decisions that mould their ministries over the course of their ministry lives, as I show in chapter five.

Power exercised by individual clergy is ambiguous. The traditional trope of the cassocked parson patrolling his English parish like a (mostly) benign monarch imposing his will is rarely found in today's ecclesiologically sceptical world. In many ways clergy seem irrelevant to the wider population as seen in falling general church attendance (Research and Statistics, 2018b). While some measures of church engagement are very positive, such as social action/community outreach and Christmas attendance, especially at cathedrals, general numerical decline has continued with a 10-20% fall shown in most key indicators between 2007 and 2017 (Research and Statistics, 2018b). As Christian communities decline in size and impact "British people are losing the vocabulary, tools and concepts that they require in order to have a constructive conversation about faith" (Davie, 2015, p.xii), yet the influence of religion is still paradoxically significant and high profile in contemporary society. The Church of England remains the established church, linking it with parliament nationally and communities locally (Davie, 2015). Indeed, as Graham (2016) argues, in post-secular Britain, "in its renewed sense of public prominence, religion gains a renewed understanding of itself and its role". Through many changes clergy are still afforded a position of respect, not least within their congregations and other places of ministry (Percy, 2006) where their "public work is a combination of improvisation and compliance" (p.165). As well as their public visibility in national and local events such as high-profile funerals and weddings, some carry the responsibility as office-holders of positions of great historical local or national significance. By virtue of their posts local clergy may also chair church

school governing bodies, charities or trusts and employ staff. As leaders of church communities they have a platform to speak to others with authority and to make decisions affecting the spiritual lives of many (Archbishops' Council, 2015). To the extent that clergy retain power in contemporary society, awareness is needed of how that power is held and exercised within all layers of the institution of the church. *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy* insist that ordained ministers should be cognisant of the position and relationships of trust within which they work:

> 1.2 The clergy bear the privilege and responsibility of being servants and leaders in the ministry of the Church. As pastors, spiritual guides and representatives of the Christian faith, they are in a position of trust in their relationships with those for whom they have pastoral care. (Archbishops' Council, 2015)

Clergy can have influence in the lives of individuals, for good or ill, yet their power is equivocal and contested. Rightly, clergy hold no absolute power, as Percy states, "there is no relationship of compulsion between the leader of the church and the led" (2006, p.166). This ambiguity of clergy power is exemplified in positions of responsibility held by particular clergy, such as area deans. Normally without extra remuneration, these are examples of "influence without authority" (Peyton and Gatrell, 2013, p. 2).

Some like Percy might align the uncertain nature of clergy's power with Michael de Certeau's (1984) analysis that those with power may impose their will by means of 'strategies', while those lacking power, like clergy, are limited to 'tactics'.[15] This provides a subtle refinement in how power can be exerted yet de Certeau's view relies on an understanding of power seen in terms of achieving the imposition of the will of one person (or group) over another. The position of clergy is not analogous to an effective military leader or resource-rich company CEO, nevertheless CMC are both subject to and exert power, at least in terms of influence over others and certainly in the form of their own ability to determine important aspects of their patterns of ministry.

[15] See Michael de Certeau (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life* pp. 35-38.

Conclusion

In this thesis I demonstrate that while being subject to power of different kinds, clergy also exert power, including by setting their own priorities and making decisions about their ministries. The multifaceted ecosystem of power for CMC ministry is both subtle and diverse as will be demonstrated in the following chapters. Clergy exhibit awareness with regard to the forces and expectations to which they find themselves subject. As Peyton and Gattrel (2013) argue,

> Power and control are not just in organizations and structures, but also in individual minds, bodies and souls. Although control may appear to be imposed by power from outside (e.g. diocesan discipline imposed by archdeacons on clergy) personal conviction is fundamental. (p. 81)

Furthermore, there is a sense of self-determination within the priest that both protects the individual from the full force of external powers and engenders personally distinctive action and identity:

> Priests are not just 'docile bodies' in the sense indicated by Foucault when he considers the control of individuals by the state. Rather priests draw upon personal and agential resources to maintain interior self-discipline because it is their person sense of 'being ordained' in the service of God, which is the source of order. There is nothing temporary or negotiated about the priestly desire to be obedient (Peyton and Gattrel, 2013, p.81).

In these ways clergy can determine their own response to their situations (Lamont, 2011) and make decisions about their current and future ministries.

While the uncomfortable language of competition or even predation may not be welcomed in discussion of relationships within the Christian community, the warnings of Sideris (2006) and Sykes (2006) must be heeded about the need for awareness of the darker sides of ecology and power respectively. This is because, firstly, the unappealing elements of ecosystems are potentially as pertinent as the appealing ones in our analysis of social relationships, and secondly, if the church is to grow in maturity of self-understanding and to develop its potential for good, the reality of different aspects of power within itself and beyond should be given due attention and response. For understanding

CMC ministries, therefore, the ecosystem of power provides a complex and comprehensive conceptualisation that incorporates each expression and type of power. As each fluctuates, strengthening and waning in its influence, decisions made by CMC over time thus form into their ministry patterns.

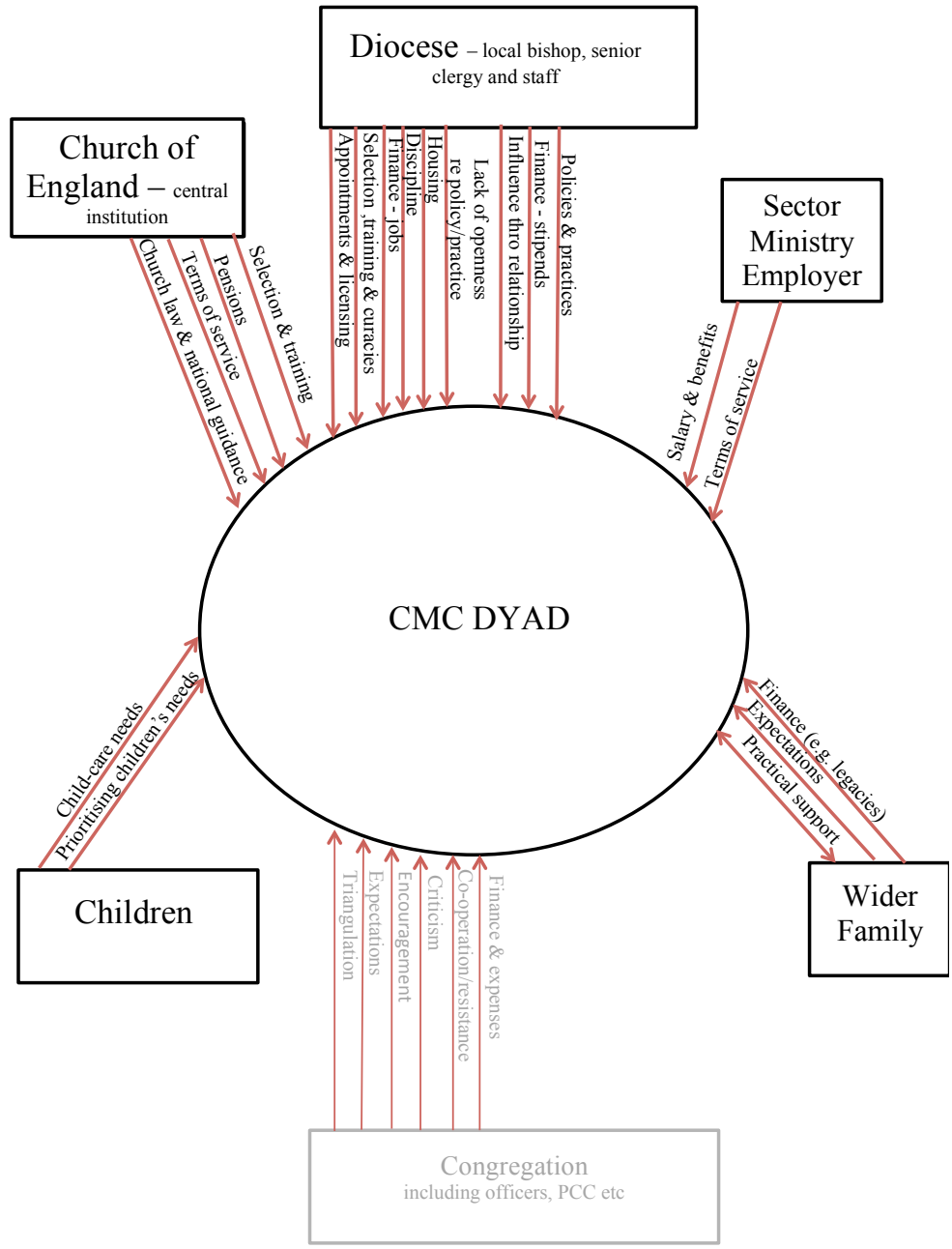
In the following chapters I draw on evidence from timeline interviews with CMC to show how their ministry patterns are shaped by forces of constraint and opportunity from more powerful elements of their ecosystem of power including authoritative elements of the Church of England as well as the needs of those around them. They are also able, however, to make decisions that contribute to their ministry patterns such as by setting priorities regarding lifestyles and family/ministry models.

Chapter 4: Constraints And Vulnerability

CMC ministry patterns are formed over time by the interplay of elements within their ecosystem of power. In chapters five and six I show how CMC negotiate and manage the power of others and exert power of their own. Initially, however, I contend that, when exposed to elements with stronger influence within their ecosystem of power in the Church of England, CMC experience constraints that create vulnerabilities for them (Transformations, 2011) thereby forging CMC patterns of ministry. Similar to objects of predation in natural ecosystems and according with May's (1972) exploitative and manipulative types of power, CMC are in a weak position within the ecosystem of power in the Church of England. CMC fragility is evinced by the shaping of their ministry patterns through constraints imposed by others in a number of ways. Both timelines and semi-structured interviews with CMC reveal how couples are subject to direct constraints from powers of authority, notably through policies and practices of the diocesan and the national church systems that CMC have to navigate alongside their personal and family needs. CMC experience vulnerabilities from such power differentials particularly emphatically at specific times in their ministry lives and also when there are changes in the leadership and management of their diocese. In addition to these direct structural factors, CMC experience powerful influences on their ministry choices in indirect forms such as from family demands, geographical requirements and financial needs. In showing my research evidence for this argument I draw on both individual interview data and composite timeline data generated from individual timelines. Participants are identified in terms of the type of role they held at the time of interview but for the sake of anonymity in the presentation of findings they are assigned randomly chosen names and their partners given alliterative appellations. Couples are thus easily connected together and appear as, for example, **Andy** and Amanda, and Frank and **Olivia** and Owen. Participants' names appear in bold type. Structural and official church factors direct CMC ministry patterns, particularly through selection and appointments, stipends and pensions and housing and allowances as shown in the ecogram of Figure 4.1. In this section I show how each of these constraints determine CMC ministries

within an ecosystem of power.

Figure 4.1. Ecogram of Clergy Married to Clergy in an Ecosystem of Power in the Church of England – CMC Vulnerability. [16]



Key to Figure 4.1

→ Direction of power or influence over/towards CMC dyad

[16] The relationship between CMC and congregation is shaded in the ecogram as it stands beyond the focus of the present research.

Direct Constraints from Church Structures and Practices

The impact on CMC ministry patterns of the more senior and authoritative elements within their ecosystem of power is profound, focussed particularly strongly in the early part of their ministry lives. The action of such elements can dramatically affect the flourishing or negation of CMC ministry, even to the extent of eliminating their presence in a diocese as a top predator in a food chain might eradicate a species in its locality. Although many of the church's values seek to reflect and promote service rather than power, the Church of England is intrinsically hierarchical as an institution (Sykes, 2006). Relationships of authority between members of the clergy and church officers are clearly defined with well-established roles and regulations governing the church's official activities. Furthermore, in spite of the Church of England's homogenous appearance, the bishop of each of the 42 dioceses has the power to determine much of the practice within his or her own see. Diocesan bishops may be supported in their leadership, including recruiting and appointing clergy, by senior staff such as suffragan bishop/s and archdeacon/s as well as a team of 'civil servants' headed by a diocesan secretary. As bishops have a dual role, being both the boss who holds authority in the diocese and a pastor who cares for the clergy and others, the ecosystem of power relating to the hierarchy is complicated and may be exerted not only through authority but also through influence and manipulation (Litchfield, 2006). Normally a diocesan director of ordinands (DDO) has responsibility along with the bishop for selecting and training prospective clergy and advises the bishop about applicants' suitability for ordained ministry. DDOs support candidates through the national selection procedure (BAP: Bishops' Advisory Panel) and full- or part-time training. Interviews with CMC show how decisions about particular posts may be profoundly directed, or even determined, by the actions and decisions of senior staff in dioceses. Diocesan practices surrounding appointments can affect CMC directly or indirectly with or without overt policies regarding CMC. These elements of the ecosystem of power can be seen clearly in CMC selection and appointments, stipends and pensions and housing and allowances. It is to the experience of CMC in these three areas that I now turn to show how the ecosystem of power is evident in them.

Selection, Training and Curacies

Potential CMC must submit to the nationally established selection process for clergy as individuals. Although *Clergy Couples Guidance* (Ministry Division, 2009) is not always distributed to CMC it outlines the most recent stated official position regarding CMC, noting that some couples "have married during training or soon afterwards whilst for other couples the second partner's vocation has been realised some years later" (2009, 2.1). Where a couple is already married and wishes to offer for ordination at the same time, they attract advice from Ministry Division "on a case-by-case basis" (2009, 2.2). For some potential CMC their sense of call is closely bound with each other: among the 15 participants of this study 11 couples met before training, with 9 training together for at least part of the time and 8 ordained together, indicating the coherence of their journey together. Nevertheless, the official guidance recommends that in selection each partner be treated separately as an individual (Ministry Division, 2017).[17] **Andy** (part-time incumbent) sensed a strong sense of vocation with his

[17] The 2017 guide for DDOs states: "It is important for candidates to discuss plans for engagement, marriage or civil partnership with their DDO. When a marriage or civil partnership is intended before or during training, there should be proper consultation with the Sponsoring Bishop. When two sponsored candidates wish to marry each other or enter a civil partnership, care needs to be taken over the financial implications of such a move and over difficulties occasioned by different training times.... Ministerial couples should become the responsibility of one DDO only, by negotiation between the respective dioceses. Where a joint ministry is envisaged, the DDO should help the couple face the demands that two ministerial appointments can make upon them, and also the restricted financing and availability of such posts, in order to manage expectations going forward.
If married or civilly partnered candidates are sponsored for a BAP at the same time, they should attend separate BAPs". (Ministry Division, 2017)
Note: Recent anecdotal evidence suggests that when there are insufficient BAPs for the number of candidates offering for ordination some couples may be invited to attend selection conferences together.

wife, Amanda (part-time incumbent) but recalls that "throughout that process as far as we were led to believe it was a completely individual calling". There is an official understanding of the complex implications of ministry, with CMC and candidates encouraged to meet with couples already in ministry with similar arrangements to learn from them. Nevertheless there is no theoretical or theological understanding of an intrinsically 'joint' ministry. A recommendation to ordain one spouse is not predicated on a recommendation for the other. With partners seen as clearly distinct in official ecclesial terms, forces of power and influence may be exerted upon each separately emphasising the cumulative impact on CMC.

The influence of diocesan systems and representatives within the CMC ecosystem of power is evident over CMC in both negative and positive ways from an early stage during the selection procedure. **Christine** (full-time incumbent) was already married to Colin (full-time incumbent) when he started the selection process and it was the DDO who encouraged her to consider whether she also had a vocation. The experience of affirmation and acknowledgement from such authoritative figures helped her become more alert to the possibilities of God's call to her. Others' experience of the selection process was more frustrating: **Keith** (full-time non-parochial) explained the extended process of selection of his wife Karen (part-time associate minister) who was not finally recommended for ordination until her forties, about twenty years after her first selection conference, thus thwarting the couple's hopes of a mutually supportive ordained ministry for many years. Those with authority within the system can strongly influence or even determine the very existence of authorised CMC ministries through the selection and training process. Individuals and couples are powerless to challenge or appeal decisions in any formal way but must wait for future opportunities.[18]

[18] "3.7 Return to a Further Bishops' Advisory Panel: A non-recommended candidate may normally return to a further Bishops' Advisory Panel after two years if a Bishop is prepared to sponsor him or her. The Bishop and the DDO should be convinced that all the points raised in the previous report have been heard, accepted and dealt with, before sponsoring for a further Panel. Premature

Organisation and pastoral care by training colleges and courses are critical in ensuring that CMC ordinands are trained with excellence by being treated fairly and sympathetically. Some training establishments may be creative and flexible as **Olivia** (full-time incumbent) found when training part-time with teenage children alongside Owen's (non-parochial/education) parish responsibilities at the time:

> I was really lucky actually, because [my college] was only an hour up the road and they ... are very accommodating, and they do part-time, but living-in, training… But so they did, um, an evening course for people… which was once a week, but what I did and several others did, was we *stayed* during the week, around that evening.

Where couples do not fit the standard profile of ordinands' training and funding needs, however, the experience can be disheartening. **Fiona** (part-time assistant parish priest) and Frank (full-time incumbent) found that their theological college's lack of awareness of future CMC led to the couple being excluded from valuable development opportunities:

> You're not *single*, so you're not part of the singles community, but the spouses very much connected in their own group, which you're not a part of…[so] we missed out on doing the marriage course … because it was organised through the spouses group and nobody thought to tell the clergy couples…. We felt like a problem to the system. We *were* a problem to the system.

The initial engagement of CMC with the structures of the Church of England exemplifies a period of great vulnerability for CMC within the ecosystem of powre. Not only are they subject to the normal processes of selection and training but their individual needs may be quite disparate and their joint needs as a pair can be challenging for dioceses and training establishments to understand

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return to a Panel should be resisted, whatever the pressure from candidate, incumbent, or anyone else. A candidate may attend a maximum of three Bishops' Advisory Panels provided a Bishop is willing to sponsor him or her." Ministry Division (2017). *Sending candidates to BAP: A guide to the selection process, a reference handbook for DDOs*.

and accommodate. This vulnerability continues into active ministry, especially into the first appointment of CMC as curates.

An essential aspect of the latter part of the training period is in the allocation of training curacies. This first appointment is a time of particular vulnerability for all clergy (Burton and Burton, 2009) but doubly so for CMC who either need two suitable training posts or a second post to link with the location of a partner's existing position. The first place to seek a curacy is normally in the diocese that sponsored the ordinand's original candidature for ministry. *Clergy Couples Guidance* (Ministry Division, 2009) recommends that "it is helpful for both partners to become candidates of one diocese" (2009, para 3.2, p.6) such that the search for curacies for both ordinands can be undertaken in a unified fashion. When ordinands marry, or plan to marry, negotiations become complicated. Some feel that they are a difficulty for the system (Walrond-Skinner, 1998) rejected by their sponsoring diocese/s. The only curacy post available in the sending diocese of **Christine** and Colin (both full-time incumbents) was unsuitable, so they were effectively ruled out of working there through the absence of opportunities for CMC in the ecosystem of power of that diocese. If no suitable curacy posts are found in their sponsoring diocese/s, ordinand/s may be 'released' to search elsewhere. The difficulty next arises of where CMC might find appropriate curacy posts. Dioceses do not generally advertise their position on CMC ministry so couples have to rely on guidance from clergy friends or their training establishment/s to know where to look. After failing to be offered curacies in either of our sponsoring dioceses, for example, my former husband and I were helped by our college principal. He contacted bishops who he thought would be receptive to us as newly-married ordinands which resulted in finding a suitable shared curacy. CMC are in the dark, but publicly available policies would mean that "you'd know what to expect and what not to expect… It's all word of mouth… so much is dependent on personalities… and who's at the top" (**Andy**, part-time incumbent). As power is gained through having more information and the ability to make decisions (Clegg, 1989), a lack of diocesan policies focuses power even more in the individuals with authority to make decisions about CMC appointments; CMC depend on the good will of a supportive bishop and senior staff in order to thrive

in a diocese. CMC weakness at the start of their ministries, then, is compounded by a lack of knowledge, information and support from those in authority that diminishes the ability of CMC to make enlightened decisions. Opacity of information contributes, then, to the level of power exerted over CMC within the ecosystem, reducing their ability to make informed decisions and constraining them to ministry in dioceses into which they are admitted.

Where one CMC is already ordained it may be an advantage to have good existing contacts in the diocese. However, if no curacy is available the problem is exacerbated as it was for **Marion** (full-time incumbent) and her husband Matt (full-time curate). In spite of the family being doubly exposed, with **Marion** and their small children established in her incumbency parish, Matt was eventually ordained in the neighbouring diocese. He consequently has to manage a challenging commute along with health challenges and sharing family responsibilities:

> basically when they can't give you a curacy and… the bishop explained it … [was because of] quotas… you can only have so many [curates] per area… we understood that, but it still feels like, well, what were we meant to do?! You know, what can we do?

Given their double vulnerability, CMC seek to comprehend the reasoning of unsupportive diocesan staff. Ultimately this does not change the situation but may enable them to find a way of accepting the substantial challenges that result and ensures that they maintain their position within the institution as self-regulating 'obedient clergy bodies' rather than being perceived as 'difficult' (Peyton and Gatrell, 2013) or non-compliant by authoritative senior staff.

The extent of power over CMC ordinands within the ecosystem of the church reaches through the diocesan system into the intimacy of their relationships. **Emma** and Eric (both full-time incumbents) met during their training:

> We had to start talking to our [different] dioceses before we actually got engaged… So we both went to our DDOs and said, "Look, we don't mind which diocese we come to, you can sort that out, but we need two parishes, so that if we are married, that would work out. [My diocese

was] absolutely awful to me and said, "well, you're not going to get a stipend. We'll give you a quarter of a stipend, and actually the nature of your calling's changed, cos you're not going to be as available as you were when you were single, and um, and then actually we don't really like your [fiancé's] calling [to overseas work]. … [Then] we came to [this diocese] who said, "Yea, we've got two parishes next door to each other that you can look at, and don't be daft, of *course* you'll get a stipend each.

The long process of appointing ordinand CMC to curacies can expose a couple to the vulnerability of personal scrutiny from the bishop and DDO while they are in the tentative stages of their relationship deciding whether to marry. When **Hugh** (full-time incumbent) and Heather (part-time assistant minister/non-parochial) became engaged during their training they were disappointed by the lack of encouragement they received in spite of already being sponsored by the same diocese: "a lot of alarm bells went off, especially in the diocese about who was going to get jobs where, and what was going to happen about stipends and everything". Ultimately their diocese did assist them in finding parishes within reach of each other that were broadly suitable for their very different requirements. The process of appointment was made more difficult for the couple, however, because of poor communication and support from the DDO which left them feeling unsure about their future at a time of great personal upheaval. **Hugh** not only experienced the force of power held by those in authority at times of great change but also became convinced of the importance for training establishments and diocesan staff to be well prepared for couples to form during training and know how to manage the situation effectively. It is notable that different CMC reported experiencing similar difficulties spanning many years showing that not only are CMC diocesan policies and practices opaque to ordinands and clergy but also many senior staff have not learned to manage and support CMC well in spite of the existence of CMC for a long time.

The asymmetry of power within the ecosystem between the diocese and ordinand/curate in terms of information, knowledge and capacity to make appointments reveals not only the diverse responses by dioceses that affect CMC

ministry but also emphasises a period of critical vulnerability for CMC at the beginning of their ministry. Powerful elements of the ecosystem of power have the ability effectively to remove CMC ministries from an area by bishops and senior staff deciding not to appoint them either because of a specific intention to exclude CMC or by failing to provide suitable positions for them. The effect of such actions, or inactions, have the effect of predation of CMC ministry in the ecosystem of a diocese. Even the way dioceses choose to handle CMC appointments at this point has a profound effect on creating (or minimising) vulnerability for couples approaching ordination.

After Curacies: Appointments to Incumbencies and More

The vulnerability of CMC within the ecosystem of power continues into appointments later in their ministries. Incumbency positions form the backbone of clergy careers in the majority of cases, as they take responsibility for serving and leading one or more church communities, while others serve in parish settings in an assistant role. While non-parochial roles are more common among CMC than clergy in general (Collingridge, 2015), nevertheless participants' time-lines indicate that they had still spent 81.5% of their careers to date in parochial posts (men 84.4%; women 78.5%). Most clergy in parish positions are 'office-holders' the legalities of which affect CMC in particular ways.[19] It is of material importance for CMC who wish to work together, for example, that "although it does not have to be full-time, one of the features of an office is that it cannot be shared with another person" (Ministry Division, 2009, 4.2). Thus if a couple wishes to share a ministry context they may not share an 'office' in the way that other jobs may be split, restricting the options for CMC of how their

[19] *Clergy Couples Guidance*: "Most people who have jobs are employees, working under a contract of employment, which is a legally binding agreement between the employer and employee, and duties arise out of the agreement. In contrast, the parochial clergy of the Church of England are office holders. Duties flow from the nature of the office, they are not created by contractual agreement but arise from Common Law, and the Canons and Measures of the Church of England." (Ministry Division, 2009, 4.1). See also *Appointment of clergy office holders* (Church of England, 2015).

ministries might be organised in relation to each other. Instead, couples have to explore alternative possibilities such as one partner being (at least officially) in charge while the other is his or her assistant, or finding posts in different ministry settings.

The majority of dioceses do not admit to having an overt strategy or policy about CMC beyond the national guidance given regarding CMC (Ministry Division, 2009; Ministry Division, 2017). CMC may appreciate the level of discretion that allows them to be treated on a case-by-case basis that may in turn facilitate an affirming and flexible approach. However, a lack of policies also means that there is no guarantee of an approach supportive of CMC, little information is available about which dioceses are friendly towards CMC, and there is little accountability for fair treatment of CMC in the process of appointments and subsequent ministry. **Christine** (full-time incumbent) expressed her satisfaction with fewer policies and was aware of the power of the bishop's approach, but was cognisant of its shortcomings: "Strategic is only good if it's a strategy you *like*, isn't it? And… you can never be sure what strategy any bishop's going to come up with, can you?"

Even if dioceses have no specific CMC policies they may have consistent practices. Although many bishops were positive towards them, CMC also encountered bishops actively discouraging or preventing CMC ministering together. **Dave** (chaplain) and his wife were unable to explore working together because the bishop believed that it would result in "too much of a power concentration in the vicarage". The power of fear and the fear of power pervaded negative operant policies and practice with regard to CMC. A change in senior leadership in the diocese can bring substantial changes in policy that elicits an especial impotence for CMC and other vulnerable groups. Practices that exclude CMC from working in the same parish and use authoritative power with predatory effect clearly create areas categorically unwelcoming to CMC within the Church of England ecosystem of power.

Even in dioceses notionally supportive of CMC, a lack of will, creativity and flexibility by senior staff has the potential to impede opportunities for CMC

ministry in practice. **Olivia** (full-time incumbent), who was ordained some years after her husband (non-parochial), observed that:

> If there happened to be a benefice that had two stipends in it [the senior clergy] would probably be quite happy for a clergy couple to do it, but they wouldn't try and work [out] that that might be something for a clergy couple.

Even supportive senior clergy can confound CMC hopes for their ministries. **Fiona** (part-time assistant minister) found that her bishop 'over-promised' a perfect combination of paid jobs in a single parish post-curacy:

> It was especially hard because we'd always been very communicative about that we wanted to work together and we were happy to take any amount of pay cut to do that, and yet still we couldn't.

The potential to block or give positive assistance to CMC ministry is held in the authority of senior staff. With extensive experience in making appointments **George** (senior clergy) talked about how bishops and archdeacons can use their influence in the appointments process. They may try to persuade a neighbouring parish to consider appointing a CMC spouse, for example, indicating how such individuals hold power in covert ways as well as in formal authoritative forms. CMC may at times be advantaged through the actions of senior clergy within the ecosystem of power but ultimately they have little control in the process. CMC have to put their trust in those with more control in the system and put their faith in God. In finding the right post **Olivia** (full-time incumbent) believes that ultimately,

> you just have to wait on God and, er, try not to get too impatient! …It's in other people's control, isn't it? Bishops and archdeacons - you should just learn to never listen to bishops and archdeacons!

Stipends and Pensions

Clergy relying solely on a church stipend to live on are particularly vulnerable in relation to their diocese/s in the ecosystem of power. Where both members of a couple are paid by the church because of the limited employment options open to them the power differential is especially great. The origins of the

term ‘stipend’ are rooted in the pay of Roman soldiers yet the principle of the clergy stipend is distinct from that of a wage remunerating work done:

> The majority of clergy receive a stipend which is funded by the giving of congregations. It is paid in order to enable the clergy person to exercise their ministry without the need to take another job in order to earn their living. It is intended to provide adequately for a clergy person to live during their working years and into retirement. (Church of England, *Clergy Pay and Expenses,* n.d.b., accessed 2018).

Pensions are linked proportionately to stipends, extending clergy’s vulnerability to the church into the future and exacerbating the impact of the payment of stipends for clergy and especially CMC.

Stipend arrangements can be very diverse over time according to the opportunities available to CMC. Student loan repayments are a relatively new aspect of reality for clergy that may not be adequately taken into account in their financial remuneration. For CMC the situation is complicated by the double impact of the demands on both partners and can directly affect their options for stipendiary ministry. **Fiona** (part-time associate priest) had even calculated that

> a full stipend will take you over the [student loan repayment] threshold, but half a stipend wouldn’t. So … with tax and NI as well you’re actually a lot better off [being paid less].

How the payment of stipends is arranged between spouses can be as concerning for CMC as the fact of the stipend in the first instance. In negotiating the couple’s curacies in the same parish, **Beth** (non-parochial) was surprised to find that the DDO in a diocese with strong support for women’s ministry had nevertheless assumed that her husband Bob would take priority in being appointed to a full-time, stipendiary post. The DDO further considered the suggestion of the couple splitting a single stipend for the sake of equity and tax efficiency in a shared, joint curacy would not be practically feasible for the couple and their young family. Senior clergy and DDOs using their power to create constructive and creative conditions for CMC have the potential to offer the encouragement and affirmation to help them thrive, to assist their family in practical and financial ways and support the fruitful ministry of two clergy to the

benefit of the church. Senior clergy's considerable power within the ecosystem can be positive as well as negative for CMC ministries.

Housing and Allowances

The normal rule and expectation in the Church of England that incumbents should live within the boundaries of the parish creates a profound vulnerability for clergy within the ecosystem of power, particularly couples reliant on the church for their employment. The principle of residence has been held so important to effective pastoral ministry that it is enshrined in canon law[20]. As one bishop writes to his clergy,

> as clergy and ministers we necessarily tread a fine line between the spiritual and the material. Housing is an important aspect of this: it is provided, as is the stipend, both to release those who minister the Gospel from the burden of arranging this essential provision, and just as importantly, in order to ensure a presence in the midst of those we serve. 'Housing' however is too small a word. Living in the place in which we minister is about a complete lifestyle (Diocese of St Alban's, n.d. Accessed June 2018).

This presumption of residence is problematic for CMC. Living in separate parishes would be difficult for any family, so many CMC are led to one of three responses: (i) the couple/family lives in the parish of which one is incumbent while the other is in a non-residential or non-parochial post elsewhere; (ii) both partners minister in non-residential or non-parochial posts living in their own accommodation; (iii) one member of the dyad is incumbent while the other is not of incumbent status in the same parish.[21] Alternatively

[20] Canon C25.1: "Every beneficed priest shall keep residence on his benefice, or on one of them if he shall hold two or more in plurality, and in the house of residence (if any) belonging thereto".

[21] The availability of paid parochial posts in addition to the incumbent is very limited; the requirement in most dioceses for parishes to pay for their assistant clergy (certainly beyond the stage of the initial curacy) makes non-incumbent stipendiary posts unaffordable for most parishes.

there is provision within canon law for the bishop to waive the residency requirement for beneficed clergy, opening a further possibility whereby CMC can be appointed to separate parishes, even as incumbents, with permission to share living accommodation in just one of the parishes.[22] The increase in multi-parish benefices has already stretched the principle of residence as the incumbent cannot be resident in all of her/his parishes, but it is in the gift of the bishop to grant permission in other circumstances. The spread of options for residence is demonstrated within the cohort of participants (also indicating the high proportion in non-parochial posts). At the time of interview two of the 15 CMC participants lived in their own homes (one couple worked in a job where housing was not provided, the other couple was retired), two were working and living together in the same parish and five had both partners licensed to roles in different parish (or senior) settings. In three of these, CMC partners were incumbents of separate parishes living in the parsonage of one of the couple by permission of their bishops. Six combined one partner having a residential role (where the family/couple lived) with the other partner in a sector post or other non-residential role (see Table 4.1).

Bishops may be unwilling to give permission for clergy to live outside their benefices because of potential problems travelling between distant parishes. There may also be concerns about the pastoral disadvantage to the benefice/s in which the incumbent is not resident and/or stress on the incumbent in establishing and maintaining a fruitful ministry while living elsewhere. If a parsonage is not available another base within the parish is important for pastoral and business meetings even if preparation and administration can be conducted elsewhere. **Marion** (full-time incumbent) related that her husband Matt (full-time curate) had been offered office space in the vicarage of his training incumbent, but felt that would be intrusive to the vicar. Matt still needed somewhere to work in his training post and a base from which to manage his

[22] Canon C25.4: The bishop of the diocese may, if he [sic] considers it appropriate in all the circumstances, permit a beneficed priest to reside in a house of residence other than a parsonage, whether or not that house is situated in the benefice held by that priest.

Table 4.1. Housing and Ministry Types of CMC Participants at Time of Interview.

	Both retired	Both non-parochial/ housing not provided	Both in same parish	One in senior role	Incumbents of separate parishes	One non-parochial/ housing not provided	Total couples
Own home	1	1					2
Church property/ Vicarage			2	2	3	6	13
Total							**15**

medical needs so an arrangement was made for him to use a room in a public building within the parish. Discomfort or even resentment can arise from parishes being asked to continue to maintain a clergy house in which the vicar or curate doesn't live, "and when the retort is, 'Well you haven't got any other office accommodation that you can give me' [They reply,] 'Well, can't you just work in the car?!' [laughs]" (**George**, senior clergy).

George's wife Glenda (full-time incumbent) is limited in her ministry by living away from her parish because even with a base in the parish she has 'to take everything for the whole day'. Where a bishop objects to breaking the principle of clergy residence in their parishes and refuses to give permission according to Canon C25.4, CMC are powerless to obtain the combination of parochial posts that they need in that diocese and may find it impossible to minister there. Senior staff with concerns about CMC ministry in general may deliberately use this residential requirement to limit their presence in the diocese.

In systemic terms, in some posts and by some dioceses, financial support is given in lieu of housing through housing allowances. The diversity of practice across dioceses in this area can be problematic for CMC, being an example of the

lack of published information on diocesan variation, contributing to CMC vulnerability in the ecosystem of power. In response to my request for information on policy and practice for CMC in different dioceses in 2013 Bradford diocese stated that they paid housing allowances when a married priest ministers in another parish but is not resident, depending on the circumstances. In contrast, in Durham the dominant principle was that houses, grants and allowances are to meet needs and cover costs incurred. Thus a housing allowance was not paid to one member of a couple living in a diocesan house provided for the other member because there is no housing cost to reimburse. Commuting costs were paid to a distant parish, however, because those costs were being incurred. Other diocesan representatives stated that decisions about housing were made on a case-by-case basis.

Although residence is often experienced as a negative constraint to CMC ministry, under some circumstances the availability of housing in a partner's parish increases CMC deployability, especially in challenging areas. **Isla** (full-time incumbent) considers that for her husband Ian, living outside the parish facilitated him taking a post that might otherwise have been unmanageable for them as a family,

> in some ways it was better that we weren't living there, cos there weren't the challenges that urban clergy face when they're living in a difficult area. Um, and that made it quite a lot easier, it meant that he could…do it without worrying whether we were going to have children or not, and whether they would be there, and whether we would be moving there, or anything like that.

Indirect Constraints

Up to this point I have shown how the shape of CMC ministry is determined by national and diocesan policy and practice. In addition the requirements of family networks also constrain CMC and so contribute to shaping their ministry patterns over time and their vulnerability in the ecosystem of power. Geographical, family and financial needs are particularly influential factors and exert pressure on CMC in their decisions about which ministries they

can pursue indicating ways in which the elements of the dyad, children and wider family are significant within the CMC ecosystem of power.

Geographical Needs

In seeking new posts CMC have to co-ordinate the already disrupting, stressful and complicated process of moving clergy jobs (Davies and Guest, 2007) with the consideration of both partners' requirements. As parochial posts are geographically bound CMC need suitable posts at the same time in a single area for two people instead of just one. This geographical constraint means that CMC are forced either to look across a wide area for posts together or to be flexible in the type of posts they consider. At points in their career/s when they are more reliant on senior staff for their appointments options for CMC posts are especially restricted (Burton and Burton, 2009). Even where the bishop will give permission for one parish priest to live beyond the benefice boundary the partner living outside the parish still needs to be within easy reach of their place of work, bearing in mind their responsibility to **"**ensure a reasonable level of availability and accessibility to those for whom they have a pastoral care." Archbishops' Council., 2015, 9.2). In the past some posts may have been created for ordained spouses in a particular location but greater financial restrictions have reduced the possibilities for senior staff to facilitate the funding of suitable new posts. Instead the need for flexibility is now seen as being the responsibility of CMC (Ministry Division, 2009). Senior posts are also restricted by geography and often cover larger areas, yet such posts are fewer in number which proves challenging where both members of a CMC couple are seeking preferment at the same time, as evidenced by the very small number of CMC where both are senior clergy (Collingridge, 2015). Clergy with non-clergy spouses working outside the home may encounter similar difficulties but they are not constrained by CMC's double reliance on the institution of the church.

Networks of family and friends provide important support where both spouses want to pursue active ministry (Kieren and Munro, 1989). This restricts CMC, either by limiting by the posts available within the area in which they receive their support, or else forcing them to move away from their friends and

family to find suitable roles. If they move they need to access replacement support structures for childcare and other family demands.

Family Needs

CMC need ministry arrangements that accommodate the demands of their immediate family. Such needs vary over the lifetime of the family (Burton and Burton, 2009) ranging from pre-school care and evolving educational requirements to the continuing emotional and spiritual wellbeing of the children (Lee, 1992). Where children feature in the family profile CMC ministries have to accommodate availability and flexibility for child-care, adequate remuneration to pay for professional child-care and/or the need to stay in an area (or relocate) for the educational needs of children. Due to the immediacy and significance of their demands, having children is one of the most compelling factors determining CMC ministry patterns even though the salient issues change as children grow and develop. Children therefore emerge in the ecosystem of power as a significant force exerting a strong and dynamic influence on CMC ministries over time.

The effect of having a family has such great impact on CMC ministry patterns that it reaches even those who do not ultimately become parents (Greene, 2018; Llewellyn, 2016). **Emma** (full-time incumbent) chose to take a part-time role while planning to conceive. Speaking some years later, with each partner by now leading a parish along with other onerous work responsibilities, **Emma** is very clear about the profound influence that being childless has had on their ministries:

> I think for us, not having children has been the biggest influence on us being able to find a pattern that works so well for us, and both of us being quite hard working people. I'm not sure how children would fit in. We would be in a very different place now. And I suspect one of us, and probably me, would be working half time. Or we would just implode.

For CMC with children the impact on their ministry patterns is indeed substantial in practice: 8 of the 15 female participants and 4 of the males had spent time during their CMC lives dedicated to family responsibilities. This

includes parental leave and other periods of time not in active ministry due to caring for children. On average, however, women took 1.99 years (or a proportion of 14.15% of their CMC lives), compared with men, who took 0.59 years (3.95% of their CMC lives). For women these periods ranged from 0.5 to 6.5 years, and for men between 1.2 years and 6.5 years. Of those taking time, the 8 women took an average of 26.53% of their CMC lives (3.73 years) and the 4 men took an average of 14.82% (3.24 years). In terms of officially recorded ministry patterns, then, while many CMC men are pleased to be active in child-rearing, it is still women who more often tend to moderate the level of engagement in ministry by taking part-time or unpaid roles particularly while the children are small (cf Nesbitt, 1995; Page, 2016a; Greene, 2018). The ministry patterns of many female CMC echo the high level of discrimination experienced by clergywomen which is accepted with the sacrificial acceptance common to ministers (Robbins and Greene, 2018; Peyton and Gatrell, 2013). In spite of an awareness of gendered disparities in general (Gatrell, 2005; Page, 2011) many participants of this study concentrate on the pragmatic response rather than gendered expectations in parenting as clergy. **Julia** (senior clergy) and Jeff (non-parochial) concluded, for example, that being incumbents in separate parishes was not 'doable' for them with young children in the equation, while the need for child-care led **Christine** (full-time incumbent) to be in an unpaid role for a time. A pattern of job-sharing or part-time ministry when a couple's children are very young is especially marked among those who were parents in the nineteen eighties and nineties. I suggest that more recent parents continue in paid roles after statutory parental leave periods due to a reduction in flexibility for ministry arrangements, more codified parental leave guidelines and a greater availability (and acceptability) of child-care outside the family. Nevertheless for all CMC parents in parish ministry there are key pinch-points for childcare. Weekday diaries can be relatively flexible because of a high degree of autonomy (especially for incumbents) but Sundays and festivals are difficult because both parents are engaged in ministry at the same time, leading them to choose ministry arrangements and locations amenable to combining being parents and CMC.

The level of impact on ministry by parenting means that the stage of ministry when children join the family has a particular bearing on ministry patterns. Having children is therefore a powerful feature within the ecosystem of power for CMC over time. Several participants of this study were ordained in their twenties (some as young parents) but overall in the Church of England women tend to be ordained later than men. Church figures indicate that more of those being ordained under the age of 40 are male and more of those ordained over 40 are female (Research and Statistics, 2018a, p.16). Some women wait until their children are through the major part of their schooling before considering ministry to avoid an actual or perceived conflict of commitment (Greene, 2018). These appear in the present study among older couples who have been CMC for a relatively short time: Naomi (retired) was in her 50s when she was ordained, for example. As children grow up their needs change and the location, quality and continuity of schooling becomes a stronger factor for CMC (Lee, 1992). **Beth** (non-parochial) was resolute about her commitment to the children being a priority and with her husband Bob (full-time incumbent) sought posts that enabled the family to remain within commutable distance during their children's schooling to facilitate that continuity. In addition to parental responsibilities, members of the wider family requiring support, such as elderly or frail parents, can add further layers of complexity for CMC. Such needs can determine that CMC move to, or remain within, a particular region in order give the assistance that is needed. **Isla** (full-time incumbent), for example, has ensured that the family remains within reach of her disabled mother not only for the support she requires but also the support she gives as a grandmother. The availability of two suitable roles within the required region and in a diocese that is supportive of CMC thereby tightens the constraints around CMC even further.

Financial Needs

The financial requirements of CMC couples or families lead some CMC into particular ministry patterns where couples have to seek to maximise the stipends they receive between them or maintain non-church work thus compelling them to work part-time in ministry. Younger clergy today are in a particularly challenging position financially, firstly due to the burden of student loans to service and secondly because of shorter curacies. These two factors

often coincide with the arrival of children that escalates the family's costs. Both in full-time posts, **Marion** (incumbent) & Matt (curate) have young children. Working full-time is important for Matt to make the most of his curacy training, about which **Marion** is fully supportive. However she expresses concern about the financial stresses of paying for childcare that they need to cover busy times during the week, on Sundays and at festivals. Two full stipends and the limited state benefits they can claim are essential to pay for the family's needs because of the financial stress of paying for childcare. **Hugh** (full-time incumbent) had to rely on financial help from charities because of financial pressures from student loans, the costs of getting married and starting a family. In addition, compared with clergy in the past, **Hugh** notes that clergy are typically afforded shorter curacies during which to save up before moving to vicarages. They then struggle to afford to furnish and run these larger houses. **Hugh** was grateful for the support of charities:

> You know we had nothing, so that was a real struggle, we got a few grants and things from various bodies which is really helpful, *Sons of the Clergy*[23] were particularly good. But it was a struggle. It still is a struggle, really…The diocese did help a little bit, and other grants were really helpful. They came at just the right time.

Needs faced by CMC fluctuate over time and are concentrated in particular periods such as when families are supporting young children, during the early years of ministry (Burton and Burton, 2009) and especially where those two factors come together, exemplifying how different forces can intensify towards CMC in the ecosystem of power to affect their ministry patterns.

Financial need leads CMC to a variety of responses as I explore further in chapter five. Supporting children in an expensive region of the country exacerbates financial pressure on parochial CMC, for example. While in some cases these needs may be ameliorated by family support or investment income,

[23] Clergy Support Trust, previously known as Sons and Friends of the Clergy is a charity providing support to clergy and their dependents in times of need: https://www.clergysupport.org.uk/sonsandfriends .

by no means all clergy benefit from such situations. Chaplaincy or other non-parochial ministry offers the chance of a salary, full pension provision and sometimes a housing allowance. Among the participants **Dave** is in a chaplaincy role while Di is an incumbent, for example, while **Luke** is a parish incumbent and his wife Linda works in theological education. While financial need may impel CMC to work outside parish ministry this is compounded in times and places where parochial opportunities are limited, including where dioceses have been reluctant or unwilling for CMC both to work in stipendiary posts. The elements of institutional and personal/family factors combine in such cases, effectively limiting one if not both CMC partners from stipendiary parish ministry.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated the double vulnerability that CMC experience within their ecosystems of power through both partners being part of the same institution. Couples are most vulnerable at times in their ministry lives when their reliance on the church for their livelihood is especially strong. At the beginning of their ministries they are dependent on senior clergy through the process of their selection, ordination and appointment to curacies. Subsequent appointments, CMC housing arrangements and stipends are also aspects of clerical life determined by policies and practices of the bishop and diocese along with the relational influences of senior clergy on CMC which direct the ministries open to them. Changes of senior clergy can create further CMC vulnerability where policies or practices regarding them change. The needs arising from CMC family networks exert additional pressure on the direction of their ministries through the constraints of their financial and familial demands from children and other family members. The impact of limiting CMC involvement in Church of England ministry is not only damaging to individuals and families, but obviates the benefits of how gifted clergy can contribute to the mission and ministry of the church.

In the following chapters I show how the vulnerability of CMC in the ecosystem of power is moderated and managed, firstly through opportunities and decisions available to CMC and, secondly, through the choices CMC make according to

their dedication and responsibilities. In the CMC ecosystem of power such elements indicate where CMC have power to determine their own actions and choose their own direction.

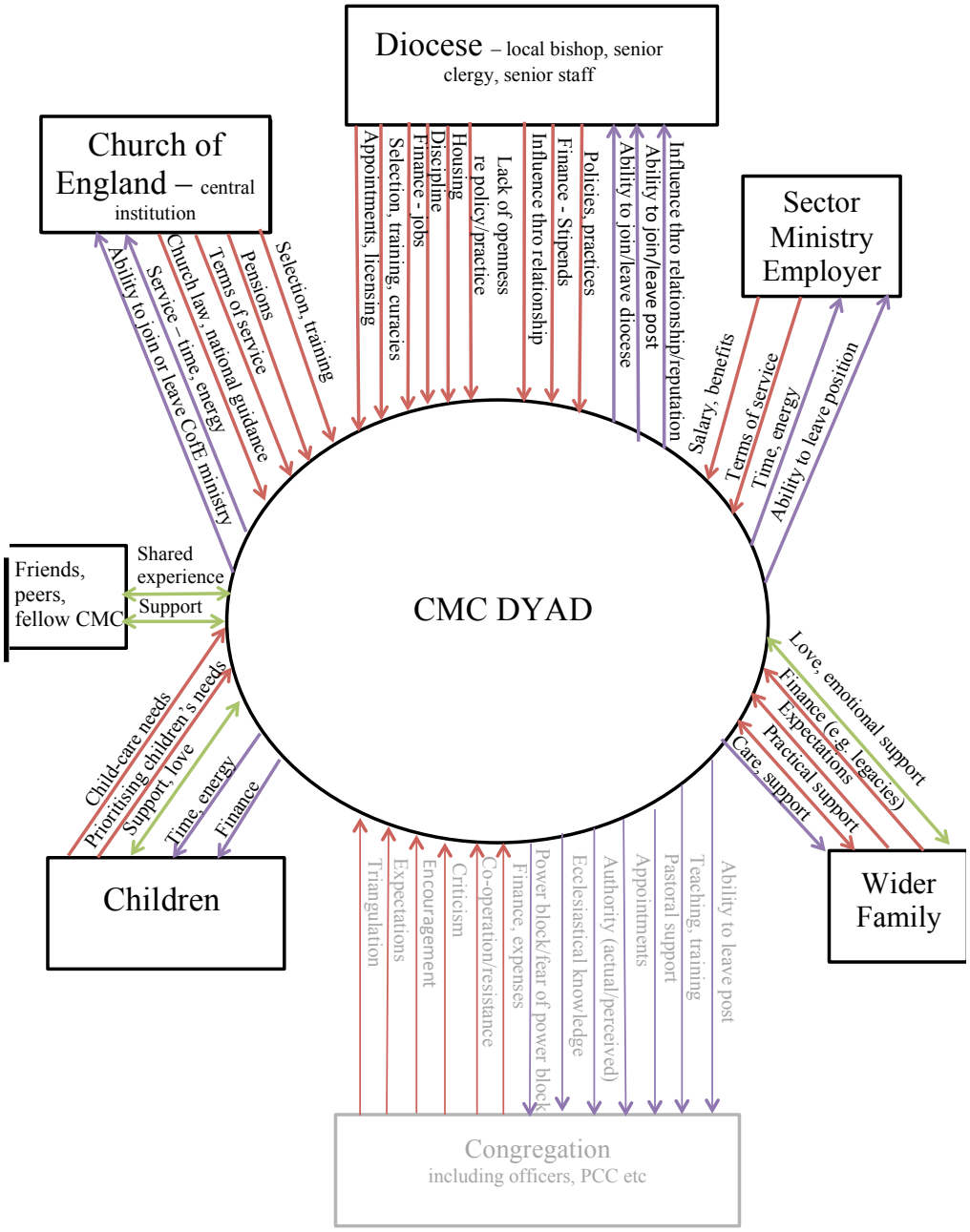
Chapter 5 - Moderated Vulnerability: Models, Decisions and Opportunities

Central to understanding CMC ministry in an ecosystem of power is how they can determine and influence the direction of their own lives and ministry. CMC moderate powerful influences over them in two main ways: firstly by setting priorities and making specific decisions and, secondly, through opportunities made available to CMC by other elements of their ecosystem of power. Features of power in ecosystems in the natural world are not limited to the predatory effect of powerful members of the food chain over weaker ones; equally intrinsic is species or individuals competing with one another for resources or behaving in ways that benefit themselves without disadvantaging others (commensalism or mutualism). Weaker elements of a system may also find ways of having power over stronger ones for their own advantage (parasitism). Such qualities cohere with competitive, nutritive and manipulative power in Rollo May's (1972) typology and are exhibited in CMC ministry over time. I argue that, through opportunities afforded to CMC by dioceses and others, CMC are able to make decisions that actualise their priorities and so contribute to the shaping of their ministry patterns. In the ecogram of the ecosystem of power for CMC (Figure 5.1) these expressions of power are identified by arrows of influence running from CMC towards other individuals, organisations or groups indicating influence or power brought to bear by CMC.

In this chapter I show that CMC's determination and 'power-to' (Hartsock, 1983) is demonstrated by consistent and/or pragmatic choices about whether they espouse an independent, integrated or tangential model of dyadic ministry, and how they are able to moderate power exerted on them by taking opportunities available to them. In practice CMC can determine which jobs they apply for and when they decide to join or leave certain posts or dioceses. They may also find ways of having influence over those who have greater power in the system than they do. Beneficial policies, flexible and supportive diocesan/senior staff and the support of wider family exemplify opportunities available to CMC

that offer potential for agential response and action with regard to their ministries.

Figure 5.1. Ecogram of Clergy Married to Clergy in an Ecosystem of Power in the Church of England – Moderated Vulnerability



Key to Figure 5.1

Direction of power or influence over/towards CMC dyad by/from another element of the ecosystem of power

Direction of power or influence by CMC dyad over/towards another element of the ecosystem of power

Bi-lateral direction of (mutual) power or influence between CMC dyad and another element of the ecosystem of power

How CMC prioritise ministry choices

As I set out in chapter 3, in an ecosystem of power CMC are not only objects upon which others act but they also have volition and power of their own with regard to their ministry patterns. In practical terms CMC choose to pursue particular combinations of posts and, ultimately, they may remove themselves from their situation by resigning, albeit with potential economic and social consequences. Within the general constraints entailed in being active in ordained ministry each CMC individual and dyad can determine their own motivations (Peyton and Gatrell, 2013; Greene and Robbins, 2015). Indeed the rules of Common Tenure acknowledge freedom in ministry overtly in the statement that "bishops may not dictate to clergy office holders how they should carry out their duties, though they may instruct a cleric who is not complying with canonical requirements to do so" (The Church of England, 2016b, 7.2). CMC are able to choose the model of ministry they wish to follow which, along with their financial priorities, effects a considerable level of determination in their own patterns of ministry.

Where official publications previously encouraged flexibility towards CMC ministry (ACCM, 1984; ACCM, 1986), the most recent Church of England guidelines (Ministry Division, 2009) represent a change in central church thinking towards expecting CMC to take responsibility for the shape of their ministries. **George** (senior clergy) describes such developments as a move away from infantilism and towards openness and clarity: "I think that for a lot of the way we do things today, … warts and all, we're in a much healthier environment where we say, 'You've actually got to take responsibility for yourself, mate!'" While CMC have, as **George** puts it, "all your eggs in one basket" and are therefore, "by definition, more vulnerable to institutional abuse", he contends that CMC have responsibility in that "you come into that as a consenting adult". Nevertheless, evidence from other CMC indicates that the need for flexibility promoted in the early days of CMC ministry is still necessary for them to flourish at different times in their ministry lives. However, as flexibility towards CMC is no longer officially a priority for the church and even sympathetic senior clergy may not succeed in assisting them, CMC have to make decisions to give

due consideration to their interests to ameliorate the vulnerability of their position.

Choosing Ministry Models

Models concerned solely with ministry may define or inspire clergy in the conduct of their vocations: Dykstra's (2005) identification of various pastoral models, for example, include the healthcare chaplain as 'intimate stranger', Henri Nouwen's (2005) 'wounded healer' called to "look after his own wounds but at the same time be prepared to heal the wounds of others"(p.77) and Hanson's (2005) 'spiritual midwife' who, like a doula, recognises labour/travail, knows the necessity of lived experience, is person-centred and deals with the possibility and reality of death. Away from the healthcare context Emma Percy (2016) proposes mothering as an alternative to patriarchal models of parochial ministry. While rich in their inspiration for ministry, these categorisations do not illustrate all CMC ministry options; the breadth of non-parochial ministries is missing, greater complexity for CMC with two ministries to consider is omitted, as are changes that must incorporate a wide range of contexts and interests over the course of CMC ministry lives (Moen & Sweet, 2002; Han & Moen, 1999).

Central to CMC models is the ministry-family connection. Van Dyke Platt and Moss studying clergy wives (1976) and husbands (2010) utilise Denton's (1962) categories of the team worker highly involved in his/her spouse's ministry, the background supporter prioritising family or separate work role, and the aloof participant who "married the man[/woman], not the minister" (1976, p.192).[24] While wives' roles have developed greater flexibility of opportunity and role as social expectations become less rigid, as 'forerunners' (2010, p.244) expectations of clergy's husbands are even looser, without previous generations to follow. Yet as Page (2017) argues, husbands of clergywomen already use their role to maintain and develop their gender and class privilege. Where clergy choose the 'team worker' model of ministry and

[24] See also Johnson's (2012) models: partnership, layperson and independent. Cattich's (2012) living sacrifice, peacemaker and faithful spouse and parent emphasise the relative importance of family and ministry.

family, "vocational ministry is much more than a husband or wife's occupation—it is a lifestyle where spouses … are deeply embedded in the ongoing operations of the church" (Johnson, 2012, p.27). Although the prevalence of 'team worker' clergy wives appears to be waning, arguably some CMC are among those sustaining this unpaid curate model of joint ministry by making it more overt and legitimised; now that both partners can be ordained the vicar's spouse may be theologically trained and fully licensed as parish curate.

Choosing Dyadic-Ministry Models

CMC's espoused approach to their ministries can be foundational to the choices they make that create the observable operant shape of CMC ministry patterns (Cameron et al, 2010). Among CMC I identify three main approaches focussing on the relationship of the CMC couple with reference to their respective ministries: those who choose to function 'independently' from each other, those espousing 'integrated' ministry together and CMC whose ministries are 'tangential' to each other. 'Independent' CMC prefer to minister in separate contexts and for the spheres of ministry and marriage to be distinct. CMC whose ministries are 'tangential' choose ministry in contexts that may connect at times and in ways that complement each other. 'Integrated' model CMC work together and see their ministries and marriages as inseparable.

Where CMC choose an integrated model they see their life as a couple as central to their ministerial endeavour, often embedded in a community together. Based on the pioneering dyadic ministry of founders Catherine and William Booth the traditional model of Salvation Army ministry (Cameron and Jackson, 2008) exemplifies this approach, with married ministers and their household central to their church, missionary and community work (The Salvation Army, 2004, 2011), although often with husbands having priority in practice (Eason, 2003). Many CMC dyads have experienced (or still seek) opportunities to minister together: **Neil** and Naomi (both retired) value the chance to lead and serve together in active retirement even though they were not able to do so previously. Couples that become CMC together may begin their ordained ministries in shared curacies and some extend their joint ministry into incumbency posts as far as possible, even being known locally as 'joint vicars'.

In other Church traditions without the restrictions of clergy being sole office-holders, co-pastoring is commonplace. As Presbyterian clergy in North America, Sigmon and Sigmon (2001) explore the benefits of mutual support in co-pastoring and challenges from complex relationships with congregation members. Their conclusion, that co-pastoring should only be considered once both partners are well established in both marriage and ministry, would be resisted by CMC preferring coalescence between the two aspects of their lives at every stage; opportunities of integrated ministry for CMC are greatest in curacy posts. Indeed, of fifteen participant CMC, nine had trained wholly or partly together and six had joint curacies. Shared opportunities later in ministry are more limited in the Church of England due to the constraints of the sole office-holder principle. **Andy** and Amanda continued to minister together as curates and in incumbent responsibility. **Andy** was officially vicar and Amanda associate vicar/curate, but Amanda took on many of the leadership duties normally associated with incumbency because they divided responsibilities by ability and preference. The scarcity of suitable posts in one place can further narrow possibilities of CMC working together, while family and financial needs might also require both partners to attract a stipend/salary in separate parishes. Thus CMC preferring an integrated ministry model often have to adapt to ministering separately. In practice, timelines and interviews show CMC switching between models of ministry for pragmatic reasons.

Although the majority of CMC minister in a parish setting, their self-determination includes the ability to choose non-parochial posts such as chaplaincy where they can find or create their preferred pattern of life and ministry. A tangential approach may be a deliberate choice or a pragmatic response to personal and family needs and opportunities. **Hugh** (full-time incumbent) and Heather met while training, for example, but wanted different types of training curacies. Later, with young children, **Hugh** remained in parish ministry while Heather took on a part-time extra-parochial role. Similarly, after a shared curacy, **Julia** and Jeff spent periods of time with one of them in a stipendiary parish role while the other pursued chaplaincy. They, like many others, had times when one partner combined child-care responsibilities with unpaid licensed or PTO ministry. Over time, and as the needs of the family

developed, both took on paid roles of different kinds. This is typical of CMC tangential ministry allowing individuals to incorporate a wide range of needs and preferences through their ministry lives. Interviews show that CMC consider their moves carefully at each stage of their careers even when initial expectations may change or may not be met. Tangential ministry allows CMC flexibility to take suitable posts apart from each other and can provide opportunities to attract a higher income and pension contributions while being able to work around family and other needs.

As independent CMC meanwhile, **Isla** (full-time incumbent) compares how she relates to her parish with the community head-teacher but realises that her stipend does not correspond to the head-teacher's more generous salary. **Isla** and her husband Ian are not regularly involved with each other's parishes in any way and there is little sense of shared ministry. These CMC may express a level of detachment from the ministry context and are content to live away from their parish.[25] Marriage to fellow clergy nevertheless does affect their ministries through geographical constraints and family needs (see chapter four), even where CMC stress their independence from each other and prefer not to be known to their congregations in terms of their marriage (which they may do by retaining their original surnames and not presenting themselves to others as a 'clergy couple'). Similar to the commensalism observed in the natural world, by choosing particular models of ministry, CMC can be seen to determine their patterns of ministry in substantial ways within the constraints of the powers exerted on them by others.

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[25] In my independent model, detachment represents a choice connected to a ministry worldview rather than a failure to thrive in priesthood through emotional exhaustion. This detachment relates to a lack of embeddedness or integration in the community and with a spouse's ministry context. This is distinct from the pathological state of detachment connected to burnout or acedia (Maslach et al., 1986; Francis and Turton, 2004; Morris, 2019) described as a "callous or even dehumanized perception of others" characterised by "negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about one's clients" (Maslach et al, p.192).

Choices Through Life-Changes

Alterations in family situations can profoundly affect CMC models and patterns of ministry, as illustrated by participants' time-lines and interviews. Children starting school and finally leaving home can provoke reappraisals in ministry. I showed earlier how the children arriving in a family can restrict CMC's active ministry. In contrast when parents are newly free of parental responsibilities at predictable times CMC may look to develop ministry opportunities. As for **Christine** (full-time incumbent):

> 'I said [to the bishop] … our youngest is starting school so, you know, we'd be up for looking for a little bit more work because we're not on childcare between 9 and 3. And, [the bishop] said, sort of, 'Oh no, no, no, no money for that sort of thing' and we went 'oh, ok!' And then a vicar who'd been part time, job-sharing, as in, doing part-time vicar and I think part time [non-parochial ministry] moved on, and so all of a sudden there was a part-time parish so it suited them, so it was convenient, for *them*. … and worked really, really well for us. And so we did that.'

While the bishop was unable create a paid post for the CMC, when a suitable role did become available the bishop was happy to appoint **Christine**. Several participants experienced or anticipated new chapters of ministry life together when the children left home, with changes often representing a change in ministry model. For some the empty nest freed them to consider the challenge of separate parishes, while others looked to step back from full-time paid ministry because of fewer financial commitments.

Choosing Financial Priorities

In addition to choosing particular ministry models CMC ministry patterns are also affected by their attitudes to money and/or lifestyle. Their priorities determine their financial needs, which in turn influence their decisions about ministry. Couples comfortable with (or preferring) a modest lifestyle may be content to take posts where they share a single stipend. **Christine** (full-time incumbent) considers she and Colin (full-time incumbent) to be 'naturally frugal':

> We went to college, funded by the diocese, not on much, and then we were a family living on a single stipend for a few years. And you just get

> into a way of living, and we've never really changed our ... spending habits, really, over the time, and so we're in a fortunate position now [with children having left home and both receiving a stipend each].'

In explaining their satisfaction with the modest living standards when required to live on less than two stipends, some participants compare their situation with a married clergyperson whose spouse does not earn. As **Fiona** (part-time associate minister) explains:

> My reasoning is that we're not that much different, except we're both ordained, we're both priests, we're equal. … It doesn't matter if one of us is in the role, and the other one supports. Financially it's no different. Does that make sense? … It just so happens that we're both ordained.

The willingness of clergy to embrace material sacrifices that cause discomfort and difficulty (Peyton and Gatrell, 2013, Green & Robbins, 2015) are demonstrated by these CMC orienting their lifestyles to modest incomes. Their acceptance of lower remuneration, however, can afford CMC flexibility in ministry that enables them to pursue other goals that they prioritise, such as a particular ministry model, to keep child-care within the family or to minimise boundary enmeshment and absorptiveness from two full-time parochial ministries (Kieren and Munro, 1989).

Rather than embracing frugality some CMC align their financial needs with professionals educated to a similar level in their locality. Where they conclude that one stipend is inadequate they seek to increase their income. Some participants of this study mentioned family holidays as an example of priorities that the family could not afford on a single stipend. The perception of financial need can be affected by context; the cost of living in an expensive area contributed to **Beth** (non-parochial) working in her previous profession after resigning from a church post: "we needed the finance… because with a family on one stipend we can't survive in [this part of the world]". CMC's response to their socio-economic context is significant alongside their approach to money. Compared to non-CMC their opportunity to earn is normally restricted to church contexts, but where their operant approach to finance and/or lifestyle leads to a sense of greater material need, CMC endeavour to find ways of increasing family income by looking beyond ministerial roles in the Church. As well as supporting

spending priorities, extra income allows CMC to leave a post early and wait for the right next job, to share a post and avoid child-care costs or to choose unpaid or part-stipendiary roles. This finding demonstrates that for some clergy there are limitations to the 'sacrificial embrace' identified by Peyton and Gatrell (2013) depending on the priorities and world-view that they adopt, such that, in conjunction with their chosen models of ministry and external circumstances, CMC's financial priorities can strongly influence their patterns of ministry.

Deciding to leave

CMC may experience vulnerability to the church and find self-determination in their models of ministry, financial and other priorities but ultimately they may choose to move jobs or dioceses or leave Church of England ministry altogether. CMC leaving ministry permanently requires further research, but the willingness of CMC to reduce their commitment challenges diocesan management as it alters the power relationship between diocesan leaders and clergy. Being prepared to leave increases the relative strength of CMC within the ecosystem of power. As **George** (senior clergy) observes from his experience of leadership in two dioceses,

> I don't think [the dioceses are] really particularly good employers! And you know, we're not … recognising the risk [of] losing good priests out of parish ministry. It's ironic, and we often, we come with this mind-set that once people are in parish ministry, you know, it's one of those jobs you never get people out of! Because what do you go and do? What does it qualify you to do? But actually, married couples are showing us that actually it's not that difficult to go and find something else.

Where senior clergy presuppose CMC commitment to the church and therefore their weak position they mistakenly minimise clergy autonomy. Although the power of senior clergy is undoubtedly considerable in the ministry lives of CMC, clergy's ability to decide to remain in post or to pursue alternative employment affects their ministry patterns. Unless senior clergy are unconcerned to retain CMC ministry (as in the predation shown in chapter four), understanding the real possibility of clergy leaving the diocese may influence

senior clergy to increase their support for CMC in their areas of influence such as housing, stipends and appointments.

Individual CMC are often fully aware of the power that they hold through the possibility of leaving their posts. **Emma** (full-time incumbent) recognises the potential of resigning and connects her influence with the level of respect that she and Eric have earned in the diocese over time,

> 'it has been said to me, that I don't need to worry … when my 5 years are up that I will be out of a job, because [the diocesan senior staff] know I don't have the same flexibility of other people… And some of this is … to do with who you are, and because I'm respected… cos … if they were awkward, Eric and I could just both say, well we're both off, and that would really mess things up for them because they would lose an area dean and a team rector in a difficult parish.'

While CMC influence is redoubled because of the potential loss of both partners to a diocese, **Emma** knows that her influence through esteem is limited by financial and other practicalities: "I think they would be accommodating to a degree, but they wouldn't create a post". Relationships between CMC and the senior clergy of their diocese are bilateral, predicated on the regard with which the clergy are held and the support offered by their managers. As I explain further below, informal power is thus exerted through relationships between elements of the ecology of power not only over CMC but also by them, which is analogous to the commensalism identifiable in the natural world.

CMC are not simply at the bottom of the ecclesial 'food-chain': powerful elements in the ecosystem of power influence their ministerial lives, but CMC have power of their own. The reducing significance of the church in local and national life paradoxically has not obviated all clerical privilege and influence in society (Woodhead, 2012; Davie, 2015). CMC exhibit the ability to determine the course of their ministerial lives as individuals and dyads through the models of ministry they espouse, their decisions and choices in the face of the more powerful and non-negotiable elements of their social world. In the next section I show how the context for CMC choices and decisions includes beneficent

circumstances in the form of opportunities that favour them within the ecosystem of power.

Opportunities for CMC

As shown in chapter four, key determining factors for CMC ministry patterns are constraints from diocesan policies and practices and from family and individual needs, representing powerful features in the ecosystem of power for CMC. Where the church as an institution reaches into clergy lives extensively and powerfully through diocesan and national policies and practices, negative repercussions on the direction and shape of CMC ministries can amount to predation; CMC are effectively excluded from particular dioceses or areas of work. Accordingly practices and policies *beneficial* to CMC are equally influential to their ministry patterns, helping clergy navigate their situations within their chosen ministry models, thereby reducing CMC vulnerability. Opportunities afforded to CMC may be in terms of overt diocesan policies or patterns of decision-making that develop into practice as well as diverse ministry options, relationships with senior clergy and the support of wider family and friends. Not all opportunities exist explicitly to support CMC but may be incidentally beneficial for CMC ministry.

Opportunities Through Policies

With few dioceses having policies specifically about CMC, other policies and practices nevertheless affect CMC. For example, a diocese offering part-time incumbencies provides opportunities for CMC following tangential or independent ministry models enabling both spouses to take responsibility in parochial ministry without the demands of two full-time posts, thus limiting the absorptiveness to which the family is exposed (Kieren and Munro, 1988). Part-time and house-for-duty posts may be appealing to diocesan leaders because of their flexibility and affordability while maintaining a ministerial presence in a community.[26] **Julia** and Jeff were among several participants able to develop

[26] Archbishops Council, Human Resources Department. (2012) *House for duty guidance: Phase 2 – good practice issues and the role of House for Duty ministry in strategic deployment planning.*

their individual ministries through part-time and/or unpaid posts alongside shared child-care responsibilities at different stages of their family life. Engagement in separate churches may prove challenging because of the need, regardless of the size of the congregation, to relate to separate PCCs with responsibility for one or more buildings. However, in spite of such demands, particularly if clergy can establish and maintain clear boundaries of time-keeping, the amount of time allocated to the post should theoretically be proportionate to the time allocated, where the number of days allowed for ministry in each post relates to the extent of the responsibilities. In his diocese **Luke** (full-time incumbent) observed that incumbencies were combined to provide full-time posts whereas a neighbouring diocese appointed part-time incumbents. **Luke** noticed that this was disadvantageous to women and others who either wished to work part-time or wanted to combine an incumbency (where housing was provided) with part-time ministry opportunities in education or other sector ministries. As a result some clergy were looking to combine such incumbencies in the neighbouring diocese with part-time sector ministry in his diocese. While not ideal for all models of ministry or family situation, a policy of part-time incumbencies and other posts can offer opportunities for CMC to exercise a fruitful ministry.

CMC take advantage of cross-border appointments to build manageable ministry arrangements. **Neil** (retired), for example, found a chaplaincy post in the next diocese when he was refused an incumbency in the same diocese as Naomi's incumbency, while Matt was able to find a curacy across diocesan borders but within reach of **Marion**'s vicarage. The absorptive nature of ministry and its complex ecosystem of power and authority is a further reason for CMC to choose to minister in neighbouring deaneries or dioceses if this is geographically feasible. Where one CMC partner is appointed to a senior clergy post, for example, such an arrangement may avert conflicts of interest. CMC thus use the opportunities of amenable policies to achieve their preferred dyadic ministry models and family arrangements.

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https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/house%20for%20duty%20guidance.pdf Accessed 9th February 2019.

While CMC are vulnerable to senior clergy refusing to appoint one or both of them to suitable posts, CMC ministry can be a successful competitor in the ecosystem of power when compared to other forms of ministry. Where there is a shortage of stipendiary clergy from older clergy retiring (Diocese of St Alban's, 2012, 2.2.1) and the population of existing clergy being concentrated in the south (Woodhead, 2014), CMC offering two trained ministers in one household can be an attractive group from which to recruit. Certainly a diocese in which **George** (senior clergy) had served had welcomed experienced CMC leaving neighbouring dioceses that were reluctant to appoint them. CMC are thus attracted to dioceses through policies and practices that are positive towards them as a group and individuals, demonstrating a stronger relative position in the ecosystem of power than was previously evident.

Opportunities Through Housing Options

While residency regulations for parochial clergy prevent CMC from living outside their own parishes, a diocesan policy of giving permission to do so (Canon C 25.4, Church of England, n.d.a.) allows CMC following independent or tangential models to choose from a diverse range of parish and other ministry patterns. Additionally, housing allowances are paid for some non-residential posts. The integrated model more often involves a couple mainly ministering in the same context, obviating the need for allowances or permission to live elsewhere. **Christine** and Colin (full-time incumbents) have had responsibility for nearby separate parishes with permission to live outside their respective benefices at different times. Each values engaging with the local community, working to maintain a presence in their own parishes. Now living in **Christine**'s vicarage, Colin's is sparsely furnished to provide office and meeting space. **Christine** describes the arrangement as 'sleeping in one place and living in the other'. When previously living in Colin's vicarage **Christine** would walk the dog and shop in her own parish to make informal contacts with parishioners but returning home to eat and sleep. CMC in separate parishes who cannot or do not seek to use both vicarages have had to find alternative ways of maintaining a pastoral presence in both parishes, while dioceses or parishes benefit from vicarage rental income.

A role including stipend and housing for one CMC partner can provide a home and basic income for the family while allowing the flexibility for the other partner to pursue a different ministry: While their respective partners were incumbents, Linda focused on educational work and Owen developed a role with the wider church. As well as facilitating preferred ministry models, such an approach can be competitively advantageous to CMC over other clergy, especially when the salary and/or housing allowances for a non-parochial post are not adequate for the post-holder to rent or buy and maintain a satisfactory home, particularly in areas where housing is expensive. There is no standard agreed monetary value for clergy housing because of the difference in cost to provide accommodation in different communities. Indeed Church of England officers acknowledge that,

> There is a variation in diocesan policies in respect of housing allowances. A snap-shot of clergy payroll data identified examples of housing allowances paid currently, ranging from £4,417 in Portsmouth to £18,000 in Oxford. In Gloucester there are examples of allowances ranging from £8,000 to £15,963 for incumbents. (Archbishops' Council, 2018, 33)

A standardised provision of housing facilitates clergy movement across the country by eliminating discrepancies in housing values in different regions but variations in housing allowances have the opposite result:

> Adjustments for regional costs have the effect of creating disparities with those on the 'wrong side' of the borders receiving less, raising questions of fairness. (Archbishops' Council, 2018, 34)

Diocesan practice is as diverse in this matter as in many others, including whether CMC are paid housing allowances at all (see chapter four). Within available practices CMC typically endeavour to create and maximise opportunities by negotiating the most satisfactory and manageable accommodation arrangements needed to fulfil their ministerial tasks and provide homes for their families according to their preferred ministry models and family needs. When they are successful, CMC decrease the asymmetry of power within their ecosystem to their benefit.

Opportunities Beyond The Parish

CMC operating with complex dynamics of sharing and negotiating time and space in daily life also have to navigate the geographical requirement to source ministry positions close to each other and the temporal requirement to find two jobs simultaneously. Both factors limit options for independent and tangential CMC and contribute to the appeal of flexibility beyond the parochial system; suitable, proximate parish posts do not necessarily become available simultaneously. The same is true of more senior geographically specific posts such as archdeacons, deans or bishops. Non-parochial posts for one or both partners can thus particularly appeal to CMC and potentially provide more income, flexibility and lack of absorptiveness than two parishes. Independent and tangential CMC wanting distinct spheres of ministry may be drawn to non-parochial posts, while integrated-model CMC turn to them when failing to find suitable roles together, especially where financial or other (e.g. child-care) needs prevail. This is an example of CMC operant models changing through the expedient pragmatism of navigating available opportunities and family needs. CMC gain power in the ecosystem through adapting to their circumstances, enabling them to find openings for their ministries.

Official Church of England statistics (Research Statistics, 2018a) show that in 2017, of a total of 20,040 clergy in active ministry, there were 1070 ordained chaplains ministering in settings such as the armed forces, the prison service, health care and education. A further 970 were in 'other posts', such as working for National Church Institutions (NCIs). These 2040 'non-parochial' clergy therefore comprised 9.8% of all active clergy, while my previous research shows that the figure for CMC is the higher figure of 20.2% (Collingridge, 2015, p.85). Therefore, proportionately more CMC choose non-parochial ministries than other clergy. However this snap-shot does not illuminate changes during the ministerial life of individuals. Stephen Croft (2008) stresses that church leaders have constantly to rebalance fluctuating elements in ministry over the course of their ministerial life according to the demands of the developing ministerial context. The recognition of the dynamic nature of ministry is exemplified in CMC participants in terms of the variety of roles with which they have engaged. Time-lines show that, of all 15 CMC participants and their spouses, 9 women

(60%) and 6 men (40%) had spent some time in non-parochial ministry. This represents total periods of 1 to 8 years, a proportion of between 100% and 8% of those individuals' time in active CMC ministry. Roles include various chaplaincies, higher education and theological training. Others had spent time in central diocesan and national church posts. Of CMC spending time in non-parochial ministry women spent an average of 3.4 years and the men an average of 4.5 years, representing a proportion of active ministry of 33% and 39% respectively. While more female CMC spend time in non-parochial ministry, male CMC in such ministries spend a longer time and a greater proportion of their ministerial lives serving in this way, indicating that women's flexibility (in terms of moving between different types of ministries) is greater, while the men have a more stable experience of non-parochial ministry. The unique position of CMC creates a need to find flexible ways of ministering while remaining within the Anglican system, leading them to explore non-parochial ministries at different times during the course of their ministry lives.

Chaplaincy may be seen by some in the Church of England as a poor substitute for parish ministry for those who struggle with parish life, with, as Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt (2011) identify, valuable and transferable experience gained in chaplaincy (e.g. management, budgets and teamwork) not always being given due appreciation in applications for other types of ministry. Within chaplaincy studies there has been limited focus on the reasons for entering this type of ministry, however Hancocks, Sherbourne and Swift's (2008) survey of 113 Church of England healthcare chaplains found that 20% of male respondents were partners with other clergy (a third of whom were in same-sex relationships), with some stating that "healthcare chaplaincy was an obvious attraction given that their partner was in parish ministry" (p.173-4). Although little specific motivation was identified by Hancock, Sherbourne and Swift, 80% of chaplains interviewed stated that the housing situation was positive for them and also many had not had positive experiences of the church as an institution, both of which reasons could be pertinent ones for CMC seeking to ameliorate their ministry situation as a couple or family. In terms of financial wellbeing, chaplains felt that their higher rate of remuneration was an advantage over parish ministry.

It would seem that the opportunities afforded by non-parochial ministry appeal to CMC for some of the reasons that I have already identified as issues for CMC within the ecology of power in the Church of England. The provision of housing allowances and greater remuneration both alleviate financial pressures for CMC and allow them to accrue pension contributions in a more manageable way than both leading parish communities. In the present study CMC participants cited a range of reasons for engaging in chaplaincy roles. For **Julia** (senior clergy) chaplaincy provided convenient part-time ministry while the children were small and her husband Jeff was in full-time parish work. Importantly for her, "it was ministry that was shaped around my household". Payment on a sessional basis provided a flexible and welcome contribution to the family income. **Dave** (part-time chaplain) found his chaplaincy role while looking for secular work following a decision to leave parish ministry due to health issues, while his wife Di (full-time incumbent) had also spent time in part-time chaplaincy when the couple sought the right ministry combination having moved to a new area with **Dave**'s incumbency. **Marion** (full-time incumbent) reflected that, "that's what a lot of people do… cos that's the sensible thing, cos it's just madness trying to do two parish ministries!". What brings CMC to non-parochial roles, then, is a combination of vocation, expediency and finance, as well as flexibility around personal and family demands, with the timing of a pragmatic need to find paid work after a partner's parish move being a common thread.

Chaplains and other non-parochial CMC engaging with mission and ministry in settings and institutions outside the parochial system dilute their reliance on the structures of the institutional church. As **Luke** (full-time incumbent) reasons:

> The church is effectively a monopoly as 'employer' of clergy. The only way couples can evade its influence [apart from the fact that they need, at least, PTO, if not a licence] is by doing chaplaincy or other non-parochial work.

In the growing 'mixed economy' of ministry for today's society (Church of England, 2010; Slater, 2012) CMC help lead the way in adaptive approaches to ministry beyond the traditional parish. Through non-parochial ministry CMC

reduce their vulnerability to the institutional church by disengaging at least one spouse from the intensity of the parish system, reducing reliance on the diocese in terms of finance and management and increasing the family's financial resources.

Creating Opportunities: Relationship-Building

The position of CMC within the power ecosystem is strengthened through relationships of commensalism with senior clergy. **Isla** and Ian (full-time incumbents), for example, found separate incumbencies through their bishop. Senior staff can support CMC by consistent practice; given the scarcity of policies, the encouragement of senior clergy is all the more important to facilitate CMC ministry. **Beth** (non-parochial) was encouraged to consider ordination by the DDO interviewing her husband, while the bishop helped **Emma** (full-time incumbent) and Eric (full-time incumbent) by being flexible and alert to their needs about their marriage:

> We got married in July... and our bishops said, 'you're not getting ordained on 30th June and getting married [in] July.' They said, 'If you get married [in] July, we will continue to support you … with the finances you had while you were at college. Your curates' house will be available, and we'll ordain you at Michaelmas. … And so we were ordained together, and we both had full-time curacies in adjacent parishes.

Demonstrating the impact of such encouragement on ministry patterns over extended periods, the continuing support of senior clergy contributed to **Emma** remaining in the diocese: "I feel I can talk to my bishop, cos he knows both of us so well" and is "very supportive [to us]".

Church of England clergy are familiar with the tensions in relationships between clergy at different levels of the hierarchy arising from senior clergy having conflicting responsibilities of pastoral care and discipline. The same bishops and archdeacons offering encouragement to a CMC couple, for example, are also responsible for the same clergy's performance review (Rooms and Steen, 2008). If there is a complaint against a clergyperson the same senior clergy may be involved in laying a complaint, assessing and/or making a

judgement that could result in the minister's suspension or even removal from holy orders (Church of England, 2016a). These tensions are reflected in an analysis of the relationship in terms of the ecosystem of power. Senior clergy offering opportunities and support may enable CMC to make choices according with their preferred model of ministry but this commensalism only pertains while the senior clergy allow it. Indeed the support can be interpreted as a form of control in itself, strengthening the sense of gratitude and obligation by clergy towards the hierarchy above them.

Nevertheless, opportunities offered through policies and flexible creativity do have the capacity to facilitate particular modes of ministry for CMC. **Neil**'s (retired) experience exemplifies this potential while providing a reminder of CMC's vulnerability when senior staff change:

> [The diocesan and suffragan bishops] arranged for me, when I'd done my training, to go and serve my curacy a mile away from [my wife's parish], which was wonderful. It was like being on the doorstep. … but after [both bishops moved on], they had a new bishop, […] it was as different as chalk and cheese… Towards the end of my curacy … it became clear that there wasn't going to be a role for me. Cos he didn't believe in a parish priest not living in the parish he was serving …and he didn't believe in married couples working together, because there was the potential of pillow talk.

While recognising the vulnerability of CMC, **Julia** (senior clergy) felt that, "the institution has been nothing but flexible, accommodating, affirming, positive. It's gone out of its way to say, 'Well, what is it that you think you [need]... and we will work [it out]'". Support by senior staff to CMC is often expressed in the form of flexibility (such as providing appropriate housing options, splitting stipends in curacies, sympathetic and creative approach to finding appropriate posts etc). Increased financial stringencies in recent years has combined with greater bureaucracy and HR development with the instigation of Common Tenure to reduce potential for flexibility by senior staff overall. The lack of policies around CMC ministry allows both creative flexibility and unchallengeable obstruction, emphasising CMC's vulnerability and their need to find ways to increase their power in the ecosystem in non-confrontational,

relational ways, including maintaining good relationships in the institution. It is a mark of CMC determination that they endeavour to influence senior clergy to allow them to minister in their preferred way and sometimes succeed in establishing their favoured model of ministry.

Opportunities Through Wider Family

Wider family members provide substantial support for some CMC ministries, increasing ministry options and thereby reducing vulnerability to the institution. Support can be through direct personal or financial support or through inheritance. Many families appreciate extra childcare from grandparents at busy times of year like Christmas or Easter, but some CMC receive more regular support. Kieren and Munro's (1989) North American study showed that CMC are often geographically separated from family support through relocating for suitable appointments. This is certainly true for some, but other CMC prioritise geographical proximity to family members to maintain their support. This limits potential ministry options through geographical restriction yet the support offered can free CMC with young children to have more time and energy to engage in more public ministry than they otherwise could at that stage in their family life. **Fiona** (part-time associate minister) and Frank (full-time incumbent) have always had the help of regular grandparental help with their young children, particularly when both parents have church responsibilities. Living within reach of grandparents has therefore determined where **Fiona** and Frank have applied for posts and the benefits have outweighed the geographical constraint. **Hugh** (full-time incumbent) also notes that "if it wasn't for Heather's mum, who … was looking after [our child] 2 days a week while Heather worked … we would have been really struggling". Rather than always dissipating family support, CMC choices to seek ministry positions close to supportive family members have enabled couples, particularly mothers, to extend their engagement in active ministry through early years of parenthood by sharing childcare at critical moments in the ministers' working life.

Family financial support provides increased influence and choice to CMC, with inter-generational transmission of domestic property having a notable effect on participants: several CMC mentioned that legacies had enabled them to

purchase property. For **Olivia** (full-time incumbent) rental income eases the financial situation for her family while receiving a single stipend. In turn her husband, Owen, is able to pursue ministry that is not well remunerated on a predictable basis. Other CMC bought housing for holidays or in anticipation of their retirement. As **Christine** (full-time incumbent) explained, "basically we have now a house. We wouldn't want to live where it is, but we can sell and at least have something, somewhere". For some, like **Keith**, legacies enabled them more comfortably to pursue non-residential posts by buying property in which to live. The current generation of elderly parents has benefitted from substantial growth in housing values whose capital is passed to their adult children (Atkinson, 2018), but for future generations, including today's younger clergy who are also servicing student debt, such benefits are anticipated to be very unequal (Hood and Joyce, 2017). It is unclear how family financial support to clergy families might impact CMC through changing economic circumstances but substantial inheritance evidently increases the range of feasible CMC ministry arrangements by alleviating financial stress and providing accommodation for non-parochial clergy. These CMC gain considerable power in the ecosystem. However the fact of clergy, including CMC, relying on such resources highlights a social inequity against those from poorer backgrounds who do not benefit and may hide financial need from those setting levels of pay because of a false impression that remuneration offered for some posts is sufficient. The situation may be more emphatic for CMC who are both reliant on income from the Church when they are already financially doubly vulnerable.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that CMC ministry patterns demonstrate how vulnerability and weakness of CMC is moderated and managed by CMC's choices of ministry models and their opportunities within the ecosystem of power. CMC align themselves with independent, tangential or integrated ministry models, making pragmatic adjustments between models over time. CMC determine whether their attitudes to finance, influenced by their socio-economic setting, lead them to frugality or to comparison with affluent families, while the ultimate ability for CMC ministry to choose ministry patterns is through deciding to leave their post, diocese or church ministry. CMC may

create or take advantage of opportunities afforded to them through policies and housing options, by building good relationships with senior staff, through life-changes (e.g. children going to school or leaving home) and practical and financial support of wider family enabling them to develop their ministries. Finally CMC can decide to engage in non-parochial ministry such as chaplaincy or diocesan/national roles. The easing of financial pressures (however this is achieved) gives greater power to CMC to enable them to have greater flexibility in their choices of ministry arrangements. Opportunities to choose models and make ministry decisions all moderate the power exerted directly upon CMC ministry and allow them to have some determination in the patterns that they develop over time.

Chapter 6 - Dyadic Dynamics: Mutualism and Competition

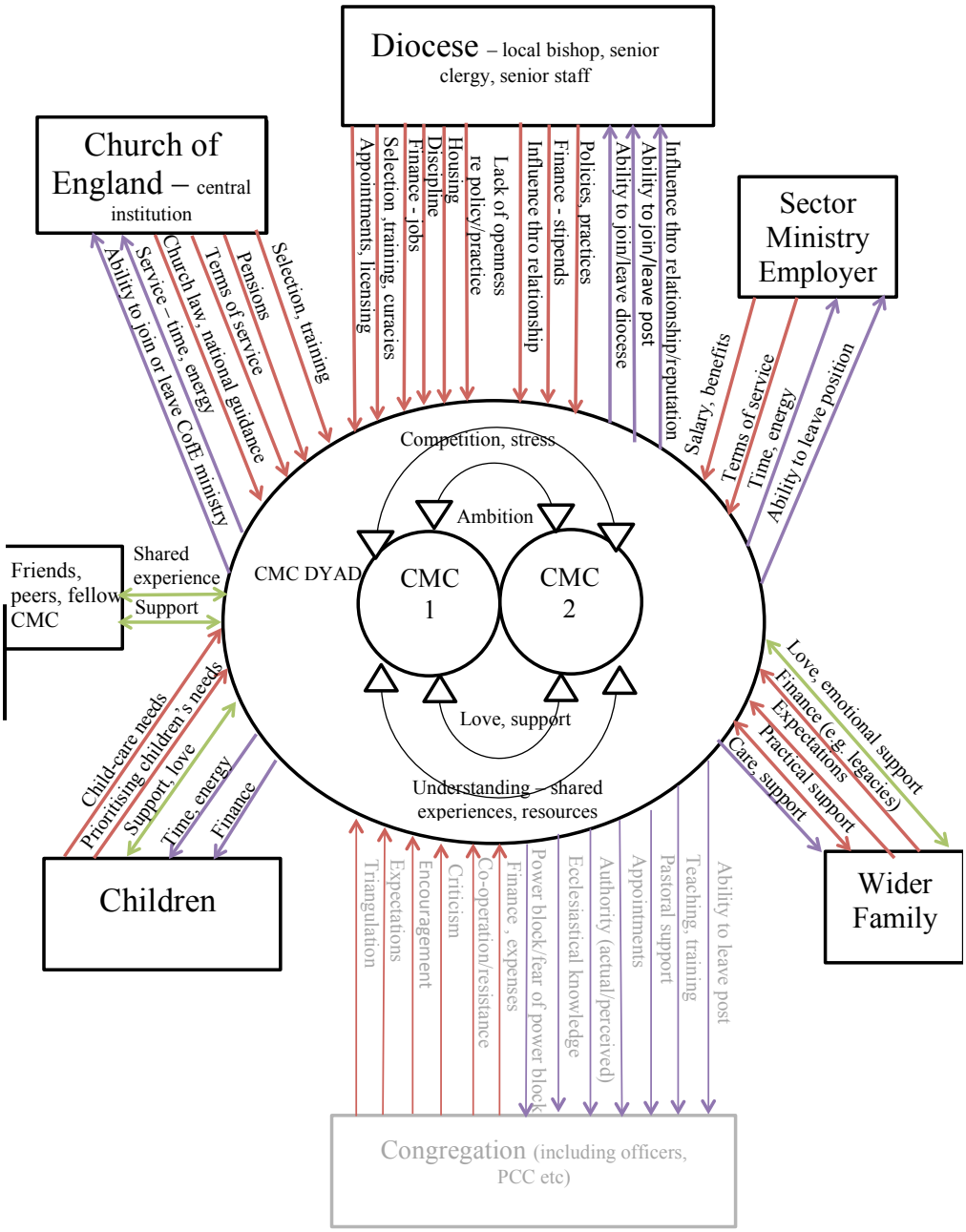
In previous chapters I have shown how the ministries of CMC are vulnerable to those individuals and groups with greater power, thus shaping CMC ministry patterns. In addition, I have demonstrated that in spite of such power over them, CMC are able to moderate the effects of others' power through opportunities afforded to them and through their individual decisions. They can thus influence the direction and shape of their ministries over time. In this chapter, I argue that within an ecosystem of power CMC are also affected by the dynamics between spouses through support and competition. These dynamics are evident in CMC ministry patterns, with CMC choosing separate or joint ministries at different times. In addition the influence of the dyadic relationship extends out from CMC in expressions of dedication and responsibility towards others. CMC nurture others, receive and give support. Of course the distinctive feature of CMC is the combination of their married relationship with their ordained ministry so I now turn my attention to the impact of the dyad on CMC ministry patterns.

The CMC Dyadic Dynamic

Alongside individual CMC's abilities to choose their own minsitry models and direction, the dyadic relationship is pivotal in the CMC ecosystem of power because of the interpersonal bonds and the level of its consistent intimacy. This is illustrated by the centrality of the CMC partnership in the ecogram of the ecosystem of power (Figure 6.1). As outlined in chapter five even CMC spouses who see their ministries as independent or tangential from each other and/or who exercise ministry in separate spheres experience the intersection between marriage and ministry through their unique level of personal proximity and social integration that in turn profoundly affects their ministry lives.

Current theological thinking about marriage is dominated by weddings (who may marry whom) and sexual intercourse (who may have sex with whom) (Rachel Muers, 2016). The focus of marriage within the present study is instead how the CMC relationship is lived out within the context of CMC ministries over

Figure 6.1. Ecogram of Clergy Married to Clergy in an Ecosystem of Power in the Church of England – Dyadic Dynamics



Key to Figure 6.1

Direction of power or influence over/towards CMC dyad by/from another element of the ecosystem of power

Direction of power or influence by CMC dyad over/towards another element of the ecosystem of power

Bi-lateral direction of (mutual) power or influence between CMC dyad and another element of the ecosystem of power

Direction of power or influence between members of CMC dyad

time. Timelines and interviews of CMC participants show lives formed by 'ordinary time-taking life' (Muers, 2016, p.201) in 'on-going time-taking practice' (Clemson, 2016, p.79): The quotidian habits, assumptions and choices of ministerial and family life, punctuated by crises and/or decisions of directional change, are built into the whole ministry pattern over the length of each couple's vocational existence.

Interviews show that CMC spouses support each other through understanding, practical and professional help. This support influences their ministries and echoes the 'mutuality' in natural ecosystems. Exploring the competitive tensions between CMC partners nuances current understandings of couples' relationships with regard to ministry. Later in this chapter I consider the impact of dedication and responsibility exhibited by CMC in an ecosystem of power, but first I show how both dyadic support and competition affect their ministry patterns.

Dyadic Support

The prioritisation of CMC's commitment to each other as couples not only constrains and directs their individual decisions about ministry options, but also indicates their level of support for each other. This is the case whether or not CMC work (or seek to work) in the same ministry context and whether their operant model of ministry and family is independent, tangential or integrated. In practice, CMC contribute to the direction they take in ministry through their relationships with each other as spouses, offering reciprocal professional and personal support, which reflects the mutualism recognised in natural ecosystems. This echoes a mutual form of the nutritive power in May's (1972) typology of power (see chapter three) in which individuals act for the benefit of others. **Dave** (part-time non-parochial) expresses the cohesion that he and Di have experienced as CMC over the course of their marriage and ministries:

> I think we have always been a couple who have wanted to find our journey through life together. We've never felt one independent of the other … we've just wanted to be faithful, and find effective ways of living, and ways of ministering, that are good for the Kingdom [of God]

> and good for people and for parishes and so on - and I think we've been very together in that.

This cohesively reciprocated approach to marriage in ministry has a multi-dimensional impact, from daily patterns of living and life-changing decisions, because it is a relationship of mutual regard (Browning, 2008). Family support is central to the ecological perspective on the work-family interface for its positive effects on the workplace (and vice versa) (Grzywacz and Marks, 2000). Dyadic support provides daily emotional encouragement, companionship and understanding as well as mature challenge and sympathetic critique on a personal and professional basis between CMC partners.

Models of Dyad and Ministry

One of the ways CMC exhibit their mutual support is by negotiating critical decisions between them. The need to find and coordinate two appropriate posts simultaneously, for example, is a perennial challenge for CMC. For **Emma** (full-time incumbent), this included considering a move out of a supportive diocese:

> the danger is that I can end up hanging around for Eric, till I can get the job I really want, … so it is, um, difficult. And we would, if the right combination came up in another diocese … I think we would consider it … but … we're quite happy here.

Negotiating decisions that have great potential impact on both partners and wider family can be managed by pre-agreed patterns of priority or spontaneous, situation-specific action. Thus, while some CMC aspire to total parity of seniority in co-pastoring or joint roles, others have agreed patterns of priority depending on seniority, and some aim to give each an equal opportunity to take the lead at different times. One female participant and her husband had initially been joint-curates, after which he was stipendiary while she prioritised family responsibilities. Subsequently, however, when she became an incumbent her husband took the lead in childcare while focussing on developing his interests in particular non-parochial areas of ministry. Timelines showed that CMC often take this approach of mutual support through pragmatic flexibility over time.

In their marriage and ministry CMC exhibit independent, tangential and integrated models (see chapter five). Within these CMC choose a variety of forms of either 'separate ministries' in which individuals work separately or 'joint ministries'. Timeline interviews with CMC show that a number of factors that contribute to ministry patterns are common to the CMC dyad, and exemplify couples' ministry choices. These factors are as wide-ranging as the gifts and skills of each partner and family needs at a particular time, as well as underlying espoused principles (e.g. philosophical/theological priorities) and operant assumptions that influence the family- and ministry-roles of each partner. The opportunities available to a CMC couple and other constraints discussed in previous chapters further affect their ministry choices. The combination and manner by which CMC use and allow these factors to influence them, and the priority couples give to each one, determine the type of ministry model they embrace at any particular time. Overall, 'separate ministries' describes where CMC function in different ministry contexts from each other and exhibit a low level of integration with each other's ministries, while in 'joint ministry' partners share a ministry context.

Within these models a further paradigm is the extent of prioritised differential that CMC couples give to each partner in determining their ministry patterns. For example the deliberate practice of a couple might be, like **George** (senior clergy) and Glenda, that the first of the couple to be ordained is prioritised. Opportunities for **George**'s ministry have taken precedence with Glenda subsequently seeking suitable posts. For many CMC participants the childcare needs of young children leads one spouse (usually the female) to take unpaid and/or part-time roles for a period. Priority of opportunity need not coincide with priority of seniority. Within either joint or separate ministries, ministry arrangements can be held in a variety of combinations.

Patterns in both marriage and ministry develop as the CMC relationship matures, with greater evidence of mutuality and cohesion over time, as Naomi expresses:

> I think as we've got older - and I do think God has one hundred, two hundred per cent influenced our marriage and our lives and our

> relationship and there, there is a peace between us. It's not always like that - we do have our differences of opinions - but … we don't want to see the other one put down so that the other one can feel good.

For heterosexual CMC, not only are men and women in ministry alongside each other, but also as two individuals they live within the paradigm of a ministry-integrated marriage. These two paradigms have rarely been addressed together. Ali Green (2011) gives no substantial attention to marriage in her exploration of the male and female through "stories and comments" from the global Anglican priesthood (p.10). Neither does she specifically consider clergy married to clergy, but draws instead on the experiences of unrelated clergy working in mixed gender teams that offer hope by their examples of "mutually respectful and supportive ministry, celebrating rather than ignoring sexual difference and setting a model for others to follow" (p.10). Green argues that there is great value to the church in male and female working together in ordained ministry. Through the rich gendered and embodied symbolism inherent in male and female priests ministering together, the church and its ministry is positively enhanced and the kingdom of God is built: "Priests who are wise to sexual difference are aware of the greater range of symbolic potency borne by a priesthood of both sexes, and understand the potential it brings for spiritual renewal" (2011, p.142). Green posits four ways that a priesthood of both sexes has impact on the ministry of the church. Firstly, assuming the catholic understanding of Christian priests representing "the Godhead to the Church and to the whole community, and represent[ing] them before the Godhead" (p.11), he or she does so in a gendered way.[27] Secondly, a gender-inclusive and gender-aware priesthood "affects our God-talk" (p.11) by extending the language and symbolism that the church uses

[27] Although Green's catholic interpretation of the nature of priesthood is familiar to many in the Church of England, clergy working in a protestant worldview and theology prefer to see themselves in the context of all Christian believers being priests (1 Peter 2:9) and themselves as, for example, holding the cure of souls, being leaders-among-equals or ministers of the gospel.

to include feminine as well as masculine imagery, models and examples.[28] Thirdly, a priesthood of women and men together will relate to members of the faith community in more meaningful ways than those traditionally prioritising the male. Finally, "where the feminine is acknowledged and honoured" priests are able to give value and encouragement to all members of the church as they grow in discipleship and vocation (p.12). Thus,

> a priesthood of both sexes, aware of its potential to transform and revitalise ancient symbolic meanings, can help us towards being the inclusive, welcoming community that Jesus modelled in his ministry. (p.7).

CMC, even those ministering in separate spheres, inhabit the living reality of a priesthood of both sexes in the church.

Dyad and Ministry Models over Time

A snap-shot indication of CMC models shows that CMC engage in varied patterns of ministry. However a key feature of CMC ministries evident from this research is how CMC vary their operant models and working arrangements over the course of their ministry lives. Timelines indicate that, even in the (few) cases where a principled basis for priority of one or other partner is stated overtly, the majority of CMC flex and adapt to needs and opportunities throughout their ministerial lives rather than consistently maintaining a particular pattern of precedence. This is not to say that, generally speaking, their patterns of ministry run counter to gendered norms; male CMC do tend to hold the senior post of the couple for more of the time. In joint ministries seniority has particular impact on CMC because of the shared ministry context in which one partner is, in official terms at least, in direct authority over another. This is true even where a couple intentionally share a role, because apart from a few instances nationally (Collingridge, 2015) the male is usually recorded in the more senior position in official records. **Andy** and Amanda's situation as joint incumbents is rare. More often one partner is clearly senior (incumbent) while the other is subordinate (curate or associate vicar/rector). Where CMC partners have equal seniority this can be either in primary roles (such as parish incumbents or senior chaplains) or

[28] See also Ruether (1993), Hampson (1990), McFague (1982) and Slee (2004, 2010).

assistant roles (such as curates). 67% of participant couples experienced time in equal seniority for an average period of 6.4 years. In my research I included clergy holding the unpaid management position of area dean as being senior to incumbents. Timelines also show a clear gender differential in favour of men: Similar numbers of male and female CMC have time senior to their spouses (7 of 15 female and 8 of 15 male CMC), however, the gender differential is substantial in the average length of time spent in seniority, which was only 2.6 years for women compared to 8.9 years for men.

CMC engage in ministry in different contexts and of diverse sorts over the course of their ministry lives. Times of reduced engagement in ministry and absence from ministry also occur. In life course studies, middle-class dual-earner couples 'scale back' by placing limits (e.g. time at work, amount of travel and responsibilities) and 'trading off' (Becker and Moen, 1999) where couples shift at different times between which of them focuses on home/family and which on career. Women tend to scale back more than men, primarily at the birth of their first child. When men do so it is when their careers are established enough to benefit from "an acceptable level of flexibility and autonomy" (p.1003) to re-configure their level of engagement with career. As discussed in chapter four many male and female CMC spend time focussing on family responsibilities. In addition, 7 of 15 female and 4 of 15 male CMC spent time away from active ministry or family responsibilities, for an average of 1.9 years for women and 2.8 years for men. Reasons CMC gave included needing to leave stressful or unsuitable ministry situations, seeking posts, physical ill-health or mental wellbeing. Giving such flexibility to each other is a way that CMC provide intra-dyadic support and reduce vulnerability to the institution. This is especially critical where a reliance on clergy accommodation would otherwise render scaling back in ministry impossible. By the "competent, confident and pragmatic" approach of clergy noted by Peyton (2009, p.437) CMC are able to adapt according to the opportunities and constraints within which they function and in the light of their personal and family needs and priorities as these factors develop and change. For a timeline example, see Appendix C.

Dyadic Competition

Scholars rarely fully explore CMC competition and appear nervous of its negative impact on relationships. Rallings and Pratto (1984) suspect that it is an unspoken yet acute reality lurking beneath a false sense of joyous acceptance of CMC ministry, with the implication that even the silence surrounding competition creates a taboo within CMC marriages. In her theological reflection given at the early Double Vision conference of CMC, Joy Tetley (1992) exhorts CMC to adopt a non-competitive model as reflective of the triune God of whom "relationship is of the essence" (p.154) and who is characterised by a dynamic integration of mutual love, respect and intimacy between God's three persons without "assimilation, absorption or annihilation" (p.155). Meanwhile Sue Walrond-Skinner (1998) considers that there is potential for "the competitive tendencies of the couple" (p.225) that may occur to be "transformed into co-operative effort" when they are "synergistic and provide energy and impetus to each other's ministry". In spite of its challenge to an idealised view of marriage projected onto CMC relationships, competition may have a valuable role in the outworking of CMC marriage and ministry as a way of processing and resolving the challenges of asymmetric power within the dyad.

In a natural ecosystem, competition is ambiguous in effect, albeit with potentially serious consequences for individual elements within the network. Competition presupposes limited resources, whereby scarcity creates a necessity for individuals and species to compete to meet their needs. Where there is not enough for all to have everything they need, competition ensues and those with greater power are best able to survive and they win advantage. Asymmetric power is therefore an essential prerequisite for competition. In placing competition in the middle of his range of types of power Rollo May (1972) acknowledges that competition may have either beneficial or injurious intent, with results depending on the situation, individuals and motivation involved. In the case of CMC, the results of competition may not be as extreme as the life or death outcomes of the 'survival of the fittest' in evolutionary theory but it can certainly contribute to choices CMC make about which ministries and working arrangements they are prepared and able to consider. The effect of competition

on CMC ministry patterns is connected to the asymmetry between CMC spouses created by limited resources of different kinds in particular jobs, time and space.

Each CMC partner needs time and space to fulfil the requirements in pursuit of their ministry as well as their family responsibilities. One way CMC partners experience competition with each other is in carving out adequate time to fulfil their different obligations. Each CMC partner in active ministry also needs enough space to work and to store their books, resources and other equipment. As I have already discussed, the constraints and complexities experienced by CMC with regard to residency, especially in parish settings, are considerable. Clergy housing for incumbents is expected to conform to set standards in terms of size, layout and number of rooms as outlined in the commonly called 'green guide'. A study provides space beyond family areas for pastoral and administrative work as well as small meetings in a quiet and private setting.

> The rest of the accommodation should allow for two family rooms (excluding kitchen) and sleeping space for an occasional maximum of seven people in four rooms. One of the family rooms (generally the living room) should be sufficiently large to allow clergy to offer hospitality to their parishioners…. However, this room should not be regarded as a substitute for a proper parish meeting place elsewhere. (Church Commissioners, 1998)

The green guide provides a standard across all parts of different dioceses.[29] Where CMC live and work in the same location (whether or not that is the locus of both ministries) their space needs are proportionately greater than solo clergy and their arrangements for work-space may be complex. Given a finite amount of space and the risk of encroachment into family areas, the ability of CMC to find ways of sharing or negotiating access to the available space can therefore be critical. **Marion** (full-time incumbent) could not imagine sharing a

[29] The standard of incumbents' housing is the same regardless of inequity with nearby residents. That is addressed to some degree by the advice to design parsonages in styles in keeping with the surrounding area.

study with Matt (full-time curate) because of their different needs for working environments; one needs music to work while the other prefers quiet. Storage is a further limitation, "our books wouldn't be able to get in the same room together, for a start!" If the working arrangements of a CMC couple are not compatible and/or the study provided in a parsonage is not large enough for two desks and two sets of equipment a further room needs to be used as a study. A second appropriate room may not be readily available in the house and family accommodation needs may therefore be compromised. When sharing a study CMC also need to find ways of negotiating access to the shared space to accommodate any pastoral or business meetings that prevent the other person from working there, so requiring compromise and agreement. There may be reasons why access to space may be on an asymmetrical basis, for example if one partner is the resident incumbent and occupies the main study space for local meetings. Some CMC have a shared diary with a principle of 'first come, first served' for both time and space, such as a calendar at home which acts as the negotiating arena between partners. For **Fiona** (part-time associate minister) for example, the first to write in an appointment or funeral has priority and the other partner is thereby responsible for childcare for the duration of the appointment. The matter of negotiated time is especially important where a range of essential priorities are involved such as the care of young children. Technology may provide tactics for managing limitations. **Isla** (full-time incumbent) comments that (full-time incumbent) Ian's ease with online resources enables him to maximise his available time and space. He prioritises good communication equipment and a mobile phone contract that provides adequate data so that, in spite of only a small study at home and no office base in the parish, he is able to function as effectively as possible in his role. Limitations in the paradigm of space thus create a competitive situation that CMC may be able to manage by negotiation and using the second paradigm of time.

Shared or parallel curacies can be the setting for a satisfying level of equality between CMC couples but curates' houses very often do not achieve the size and layout recommended in the green guide for parsonages. Space is therefore at a particular premium during this phase of ministry and all the more so when a number of dependents live at home. As **Beth** (non-parochial) recalls:

> We shared a tiny, tiny 4th bedroom as our study. We literally sat back-to-back and our chairs touched, and so when one of us wanted to stand up we had to ask permission, 'Sorry, can I stand up, please?' … So the detail of how close we had to work together was, literally, [laughs] down to sharing, you know, back-to-back chairs in the study. And there was no problem. We just, we've always worked together well and we've always communicated well.

In addition to being particularly vulnerable to the power of the institution at this stage, then, early career CMC are exposed to greater limitations of space than more senior clergy, which then require a higher level of cooperation and negotiation and creating greater potential for intra-dyadic competition.

Associated with a self-aggrandisement antithetical to the modest humility concomitant with Christian service, competition is usually considered to be a negative aspect of CMC relationships (Rallings and Pratto, 1984; Tetley, 1992). However, competition can have advantageous effects (May, 1972). **Fiona** (part-time associate minister) experienced competition in an uncomfortable way when, having enjoyed an equal, joint curacy, Frank was licensed as incumbent at a new church without her having an official role:

> If I'm honest, I was intensely jealous …at his licensing … Having job-shared and having been seen as completely equal, it was a real shock... and people didn't really know who I was! You know, and that was, for my pride, that was quite hard.

In this case the negative experience of competition arose from a change involving one partner's loss of status and role that occurred simultaneously with the contrasting intense moment of affirmation of the previously equal other partner. Young children needing care now limited parents' available time to work outside the home, such that only one partner was free to engage in full-time ministry at that point. The scarcity of time results in asymmetry of opportunity in ministry. Conflicting emotions are experienced at such times of change by supportive partners who are genuinely pleased for a spouse's new job and opportunities yet also feel sadness, resentment or jealousy. The sense of competition is a reasonable response of the partner with fewer opportunities who is feeling undervalued in a difficult process of transition. Competition, then, is a

way of asserting the need for recognition of competencies and worth. My own experience was that taking maternity leave gave me opportunities to stretch beyond the equality of a joint curacy post in which I was trained alongside my husband, and to develop my distinctive ministry as an ordained woman in a new phase of my life. Refusal to have one's identity subsumed experienced as competition, is in part a healthy move to counter the very risk, identified by Walrond-Skinner (1998), of one partner being absorbed by the other due to the high levels of cohesion and similarity in CMC marriages. [30]

A similar assertion of identity or personhood can be seen in the competition between CMC spouses in how they conduct their ministry work. For one participant, **Andy**, competitiveness provokes development. Seeing his wife lead or preach better than him encourages him to improve his own ministry skills. The couple appreciate each other's abilities and gifts but they have been able to use their differences as motivation to improve in areas of weakness and share the benefits of each other's strengths. Their division of responsibilities in a shared ministry context is organised on a similar basis: **Andy** takes the lead in pastoral and children's work rather than the strategy and vision that he would be less comfortable spearheading. When each spouse brings particular abilities to the tasks at hand there may be variance in the ease, prolificacy or level of skills in specific areas, exposing an inequality between the partners that can be experienced as competition by either of them. **Christine** (full-time incumbent) has felt that in the past competition was expressed in the couple sharing news of their successes in ministry with each other. However, having gained in confidence over time, she no longer feels the need to engage in such exchanges, nevertheless she has needed to learn strategies for the couple to work well together at points where there is an asymmetry in the valuable resource of ideas for ministry:

> He is great at taking all my ideas and using them, but I do insist that he doesn't use them until after I've used them! Because I have written quite

[30] How CMC marriages fail to navigate the challenges of ministry leading to marriage breakdown was not within the scope of this study. Rates and causes of CMC divorce is an area for future research.

> a lot of material in the past, and then heard he's used it, and everyone's told me how good it is, and isn't he clever, and I'm … [chuckles] you can imagine! – "It was such a good Crib Service – oh it was marvellous! So funny how he …" Did he? Oh, good!

The particularly positive reception of **Christine's** material when it was presented by her husband Colin, raises the question of whether, and how, gender contributes to CMC intra-dyadic competition. My research did not incorporate data from CMC's congregations or other ministry contexts, so it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions from perspectives other than CMC. Indeed, exploring the experiences of such groups would be a valuable area of further research. Nevertheless, as Emma Percy (2017) argues, in spite of women now consecrated as bishops, ordained women have received an 'ambiguous welcome' to the Church of England's ministry because of persistent institutionalised resistance through the 'two integrities' principle by which those opposed to the ordained ministry of women are accorded an equal and protected place within the life and ministry of the church.[31] In quotidian ministry such principles may not dominate the thought of most ordained women, but androcentric culture is pervasive through language and recruitment strategies (Bagilhole, 2002, 2003). The particular scrutiny of ordained women by colleagues and congregants extends to their dress through which they experience exclusion, in worship and other settings in the face of 'masculinist norms and traditions [that] have been embedded for centuries' (Page, 2014, p.230). Female priests in Page's (2014) study altruistically prioritise the views of worshippers in their clothing choices, indicating the complex interplay within the ecosystem of power with congregation members. **Christine**'s concern about Colin using her material before her further suggests that CMC women are alert to the need to assert their identity and competence as able ministers in relation to their husbands, perhaps

[31] Those selected for ordination in the Church of England are currently still required to assent to 'five guiding principles' intended to enshrine 'mutual flourishing', by accepting that the decision to consecrate women bishops has been made as well as committing that 'those are who are unable to receive the ministry of women' are enabled 'to flourish within [the Church of England's] life and structures'. https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/the_five_guiding_principles.pdf

cognisant of male clergy's greater acceptability to worshippers within a traditionally male-oriented priesthood.

Competition becomes a signal of tension arising from an asymmetry of power within the CMC couple, with CMC appearing to be unwittingly using competition as a way of managing asymmetry within their close professional relationship to maintain their individual sense of vocation and identity as ministers. Where competition can be utilised in a way that is not at the expense of either partner, it may create a positive outcome of growth and development for CMC in both ministry and marriage. Where CMC wish to avoid, avert or even embrace asymmetry of power between them this can be factored into ministry decisions by incorporating their preferences into their ministry model/s and decisions.

Dedication and Responsibility Affecting Patterns of CMC Ministry

The power exerted by CMC within their ecosystem extends beyond the mutual relationship of the dyad into other relationships in which CMC have influence. I have already discussed the importance of children and other dependents as constraints on CMC ministry patterns in chapter four, but they are also an example of where CMC have the ability to influence through their relationships of responsibility and care. Thus in the ecogram representing the ecosystem of power (Figure 6.1), arrows emanate from CMC to, for example, their wider family and friends, indicating power that is applied towards, with, or over them. This influence may be in terms of emotional support for friends and clergy peers as well as financial, emotional and practical support for family members that can be described as nutritive or integrative power (May 1972). Nutritive power is caring parental power over and responsibility for dependents such as in raising children, while integrative power represents the effect of standing alongside a weaker individual in solidarity. For CMC, the expression of these types of power are often in the context of relationships of mutual influence, albeit in diverse forms and expressions.

Martyn Percy's (1998; 2019) research into expressions of power within church congregations argues for the importance of attending to power for

congregational studies, not just because it illuminates the "culture, theology or anatomy of the local church" (Percy, 2019, p.525) but by contributing to the practical theological work of analysing churches through conventional and unconventional understandings of power dynamics, including both the structures and working of official authority and the more subtle and unacknowledged cultural forms of authority that affect church life. While not the primary focus of the present study, the asymmetry of power between CMC and their ministry contexts attracts interest from practitioners, their managers and congregations including citing the fear (and/or reality) of 'power blocs' in the vicarage where two clergy are present. A proper treatment of this aspect of CMC ministry would require its own in-depth attention from future researchers through engagement with CMC congregations and other ministry contexts.

It is nevertheless clear that all clergy hold power through responsibility by virtue of their ordination and the roles they inhabit, not least in the context of pastoral care and as gatekeepers and providers of opportunities to engage in worship in the Christian community. At the same time, clergy receive as they give and can themselves be acutely influenced by the need to be needed and/or the want to be wanted. As Emma Percy (2014) reflects:

> In parish ministry all those who are seeking God through the rituals of the Church are dependent at some level on the priest to provide for them and nurture them. Clergy, therefore, need to resist any temptations to be manipulative or capricious in the access they provide to the sacraments, worship and ministry of the Church. Pastoral ministry will provide the most intense cases of temporary asymmetrical relationships shaped by need. Such encounters need specific relationships of dependence when people are vulnerable and look for care from the clergy. These relationships can take up time and energy, but they can also be affirming and exhilarating. To feel needed is a powerful experience and in a job where it can often be hard to measure the fruitfulness of one's efforts, the instant gratification of pastoral relationships can be validating.' (p.116)

As I outlined earlier, children and other dependent family members can constrain CMC and so have a profound influence on the decisions that create

their ministry patterns. However, the same types of relations and friends also influence CMC choices of ministry through CMC decisions to remain close and provide support as well as being the source of support and nurture to CMC. **Hugh** (full-time incumbent) expressed how difficult maintaining supportive friendships can be:

> So we get invited to parties and all sorts, but I'm working, and Sunday morning I've got to work, and often at 8 o'clock in the morning, so we can't stay out and we can't go for a drink and stuff, it just doesn't happen. Luckily we've got quite a few friends locally who are clergy couples, so they know what it's like, so we work with that, which is great. But it can be a bit isolating sometimes.

CMC and other clergy peers were mentioned by a number of participants as valuable sources of encouragement and fellowship that enabled them to continue happily in ministry. Their ability to spend time with friends who understand their position (and, crucially, are available to meet when clergy are free from church responsibilities) can be important factors for CMC when considering the location of new posts. **Keith** (non-parochial) describes the situation:

> you've got other people who share your experience, can talk about the same things and understand… so it's a really fun, really useful thing… Certainly in terms of support, having other clergy couples as friends and family has been a big part of our life.

Even if they are more difficult to keep in direct contact with, non-clergy support is equally appreciated by CMC because of providing relaxed friendship away from the intensity of ministry life. **Isla** categorises them in this way: "we've got normal friends, and we've got ordained friends! [laughs]".

Upholding responsibilities and caring for elderly and other family can be as important for CMC as remaining close to those from whom they receive help and support themselves. **Emma** does not have children to consider but wants to remain close to the couple's elderly parents:

> I'm keen, I think, to stay in the diocese because it suits us in terms of where our parents are… so we don't want to move too far, so that we're away from either at the moment, as they're just getting older.

Some, like **Julia** (senior clergy), have also been pleased to be within reach of older parents, even if their proximity has not been a deciding factor in moves up till now:

> We can get there in an hour if we needed to. But we haven't had to make choices around them. And we don't have wider family or other considerations that have had to shape those choices - we've been very fortunate there.

Beyond the dyad, then, CMC's families and wider social networks affect their ministry patterns because of the influence of their responsibilities and relationships, both supporting and being supported by others. Although these relationships exert influence by limiting the geographical area in which to find appointments (Kieren and Munro, 1989) their maintenance can be of great importance to CMC and constitute examples of mutualism and commensalism in their ecosystem of power.

Conclusion

CMC interviews and timelines demonstrate that their ministry patterns are the result of a complex interaction of forces and influences within the ecosystem of power. While CMC are particularly vulnerable to external forces and authorities at different times during their ministerial lives, they are also able to make their own decisions about the direction of their ministries and find opportunities to create their own paths including the models of ministry that they choose. Their preferences for separate or joint ministry models are further nuanced by the dyad's chosen prioritisation differential between them depending on which partner, if either, takes precedence in seeking appointments. While some couples are consistent in maintaining their relative position over time, most respond to needs and opportunities within and beyond their immediate family with the flexibility of creative pragmatism, engaging in a variety of types of ministry and combinations of working arrangements over the course of their ministry lives. In this chapter I have demonstrated how the mutual support of the CMC couple is especially crucial in creating and maintaining sustainability, both in the daily time-taking activity which builds the shape of their daily ministry and family lives and also in decisions of great moment that substantially alter the family's direction. Competition can occur where there is an asymmetry of time,

space or other ministry resources such as ideas. While competition may create anxiety where it is seen as antithetical to Christian values of cooperation, it can help CMC improve their skills or prevent sublimation of individual identity. Further, CMC may choose ministries partly in the light of wishing to reach out beyond their own marriage and nuclear family in order to provide care and support to others in their wider families, friendships and ministry contexts in loving concern. Patterns form through CMC choices of ministry in response to the complex interplay of dyadic dynamics alongside the influence of external forces and the models of marriage and ministry that they espouse.

Chapter 7 – Conclusions and Recommendations for Practice

In this thesis I have argued that ministry patterns of CMC in the Church of England are shaped by an ecosystem of power. My research began with asking why CMC in the Church of England choose the ministries that they do over time. From my perspective as a former CMC and drawing on critical realism I used timeline interviewing to identify how CMC are doubly vulnerable to the institution of the church, especially during selection, training and early in their ordained ministries. CMC exert their own power within the network of power relationships through espousing ministry models by choosing independent, tangential or integrated ways to function. In addition, how they relate within their dyads through support and competition further affects how their ministries develop over time. In this chapter I will summarise the thesis and suggest that using the ecosystem of power as a tool for analysis will aid CMC and those working with them in understanding the position of CMC within the church. I further propose that variation in practice across dioceses needs to be countered through greater communication at a national level, especially for senior clergy. Communication is also critical for CMC and potential CMC all of whom are disadvantaged in their decision-making by the opacity of diocesan policies and practices, particularly regarding housing and stipends. Finally, I propose the potential of developing timeline interviewing as an innovative practical theological method, outline the limitations of the present study and suggest areas for potential future study in this under-researched field.

Summary of Thesis

While CMC have been part of Church of England for over 30 years their ministry lives are not well understood by researchers or by those within the church. Of the limited number of CMC studies many are from the North American context or are focused on their marriage relationships rather than their ministries. However, previous literature points to a greater incidence of non-parochial posts among CMC than among clergy generally and a higher number of CMC in the Church of England than expected (Collingridge, 2015). In their pastoral practice CMC face the risks of boundary enmeshment and

absorptiveness through their exposure to demands of ministry as a couple (Kieren and Munro, 1988, 1989). The dyadic paradigm also exposes CMC to particular vulnerability (Transformations, 2011) because of both partners being reliant on the same institution. Local contexts for ministry create challenging dynamics for CMC in the same ministry context such as triangulation (Friedman 1985; Sigmon and Sigmon, 2001). Dynamics within CMC marriage relationships are similarly complex (Walrond-Skinner, 1998). Situated within 42 diverse dioceses, CMC experience the force of the 'fragmentation and variation' (Burton and Burton, 2009) of the Church of England through the variation and lack of clarity in policy and practice across the church.

My own experience of ministering as CMC for two-thirds of my ordained life illuminates that wisdom and knowledge of the nature, needs and potential of CMC have not been rooted into practice, in spite of thirty years of CMC. While my (then) husband and I fought to be paid and treated equally as curates in 1988, for example, senior clergy still do not routinely understand the possibilities of similar arrangements for newly ordained CMC working together. CMC are still often treated as unusual or problematic. By attending to CMC through timeline interviews in this study I look beyond a taxonomy of issues that affect CMC when moving posts, into an investigation and subsequent conceptualisation of the power dynamics of CMC and their ministry patterns.

I have suggested that CMC are part of an integrated network of relationships structured by connections of power. Observing that CMC's social and professional connections can function in ways similar to an ecosystem in nature I identify it as an ecosystem of power, developing both the practical theological concept of the living human web (Miller-McLemore, 2008, 2018; Graham, 2009) and Martyn Percy's ecology of power (2006). It is the interplay of this wide range of relationships within the ecosystem of power over time that I argue offers a key to understanding how CMC ministry patterns are formed over the course of their ministry lives and provides resource for the church in improving good practice with CMC and beyond.

Using interviews with 15 CMC individuals I have identified key factors that contribute to CMC ministry patterns. Open-ended interviews risked lacking the focus for participants to convey their experience of a long period of life within a manageable time. I therefore developed the use of timelines to structure the interviews. Life-story interviewing is known in, for example, therapeutic and psychological contexts (Atkinson, 1998) as well as life-course interviews for career advisors, life-course sociologists and psychologists seeking to understand the temporal context of human lives (e.g. Clausen, 1998; Han and Moen, 1999; Handel, 2000; Cohler and Hostetler, 2002). In practical theology the use of life story methods is evident, for example, in narrative-based research with elderly people by Ganzevoort and Bouwer (2007). Practical theologians have rarely used timelines in their research methods, but Sonya Sharma (2015) includes timelines alongside family diagrams in her interviews about the "mutual shaping of religion and sibling ties" (p.1) between sisters who identify as Christians. Danish human geographer Adriansen (2012) also developed the use of timelines in qualitative life history research. I innovate in practical theology the use of interviews with CMC structured around the creation of a timeline of couples' ministry lives together, resulting in qualitative data of transcribed interviews as well as quantitative data derived from timelines. By standardising timelines I created an additional source of data for comparison and analysis to supplement the qualitative data. This approach provides an in-depth, multi-layered, rich resource from the intensive phase of research (Sayer, 2000; Hurrell, 2014; Mason, 2006) and offers valuable potential for future use in praxis and practical theological research.

I argue that ministry patterns are influenced within the paradigm of a complex network of diverse power relationships. The notion of a social ecology is developed through the well-established practical theological concept of the living human web (Miller-McLemore, 1993, 2008, 2018; Graham, 2009; Osmer, 2008) in which individuals are understood, for the purposes of pastoral care and theological reflection, not in isolation but as being affected by a spread of influences. Researchers have articulated similarly contextual concepts in the study of clergy life and ministry, such as Friedman's (1985) family systems framework and Lee's social ecology model (1985, 1995). The appropriation of

the language of ecology in the humanities is contested because of the tendency to romanticise the holistic aspect of the approach (Sideris, 2006; Tudge et al., 2009), however its use is entirely fitting where the analysis of a social context requires consideration of both negative and positive aspects within a complex network.

Indeed an ecology of power (Percy, 2006), drawing on Clegg's (1989) theory of circuits of power, may appear to bridge the concept of a social ecology with diverse expressions of power. However, my development of an ecosystem of power is more conceptually similar to a natural ecosystem in that it describes a system of relationships between people whose relating to one another expresses diverse types of power. Certain characteristics of relationships between asymmetrically empowered elements in ecosystems are reflected in human ecosystems of power, such as predation, mutualism and competition. Power can be found in formal and informal relationships within the social ecosystem, ranging from malevolent dictatorship through to benign influence through the support of a marriage partner, as well as expectations created through others' needs. The inclinations and principles of individuals stand at the centre of the ecosystem as they influence their choices and decisions. Rollo May (1972) usefully systematises a range of types of power, according to their expression and effect, positive or negative. In my understanding power in the ecosystem also has the potential for beneficial or injurious outcome depending on how it is expressed and directed (Sykes, 2006). CMC accounts and evidence from their timelines show that they exist within a complex network of social relationships within the Church of England. The actions and effects of power affect CMC in a variety of ways that fluctuate during their ministry lives, influencing how they express their vocations and creating patterns of ministry over time.

I argue that CMC are exposed to high levels of vulnerability to other individuals and groups that have greater power than CMC, both within and beyond the institution of the church. Great inequalities of power between elements of ecosystems in the natural world result in predation of one species or individual on another, such that a powerful element succeeds at the expense of the weaker one/s. The complexity of needs across the institution of the church

and in individual families (Friedman, 1985; Browning, 1991) and social and geographical networks (Miller-McLemore, 1993; Couture, 1996; Graham, 2009; Capra, 1997) shows that diverse needs and benefits are also across human systems of power. Forces nevertheless have direct effects on CMC ministries in explicit and implicit ways. Canon law and specific policies for example (including restrictions to women's ministry before they were able to be made priests or bishops and requirements for parochial clergy to live within their benefices), have a decisively constraining impact on CMC ministries. The determination of some senior clergy not to include CMC among their diocesan clergy has also had a directly deleterious effect on CMC ministry within their dioceses at least for the duration of the tenure of those individuals. Stronger elements, then, influence CMC ministry over time, emphatically around the start of public ministry, by constraints imposed on potential CMC during selection, training and appointment to curacy training posts. Constraints continue during the course of CMC ministry lives, including the making of further appointments, housing arrangements and the payment of stipends. In addition to elements within church structures, CMC personal relationships impose further constraints due to the family and financial demands of children and other relatives. Compared to non-CMC clergy, the existence of the CMC dyad creates a double vulnerability because the couple rely on the same institution for their home, remuneration and vocational expression, as well as being embedded in the same family structures.

In spite being subject to pressure considerable pressure from constraints by others, CMC are nevertheless able to moderate their vulnerability by determining their ministry choices. The responsibility of CMC for the direction of their ministries is overtly stated in the most recent official Church of England guidelines for CMC (Ministry Division, 2009). This is evident in practice by the operant models of family and ministry in which CMC engage. At any particular point CMC are able to choose between models of ministry that I categorise as independent, tangential or integrated. While CMC can move between models at different times during their ministry lives according to personal, professional and family factors, the models describe the level to which their ministry lives are intertwined and the extent to which their family lives are incorporated in their

ministry. For example, CMC wishing for less absorptive combinations of ministry (Kieren and Munro, 1988) can choose the independent model and engage in separate non-parochial ministries or separate parishes. The tangential model is where spheres of ministry are distinct but partners are somewhat involved in each other's area of work, such as when a chaplain is also licensed to his/her partner's parish and assists with ministry there. CMC working closely together represent the integrated model in which both are fully involved in ministry together.

Regardless of powerful individuals, policies and practices, CMC are able to choose to apply for posts in particular regions and specific parochial or non-parochial jobs and different types of ministry. CMC are further able to reduce their level of vulnerability in the ecosystem of power by taking advantage of opportunities offered to them. Flexibility and support from diocesan staff and Diocesan policies that are directly or (more often) indirectly beneficial are an example of this, such as a bishop's willingness to give permission to one CMC partner to live outside his/her benefice so that spouses can be licensed to separate parishes. Family assistance in terms of practical help and childcare has a similar effect of supporting CMC ministries, as does financial support from others beyond the dyad. Additionally, CMC can achieve increased financial autonomy through some non-parochial roles, and/or remunerative non-church activity, as well as family support or inheritance. This is one of the ways for CMC to mitigate the effects of power over them by gaining flexibility. This range of choice is evidenced in their ministry patterns.

The primary distinctiveness of CMC ministry is the dyadic paradigm; how CMC partners influence and relate to each other. Even those espousing an independent model of ministry are connected through personal and family relationships and circumstances that affect their ministry choices. Akin to mutuality and competition in the natural world, within an ecosystem of power the dynamic between spouses introduces further complexity for CMC, particularly in terms of support and competition. Ministry patterns are thus shaped over time through the relative power between CMC partners, which may fluctuate considerably. CMC need to manage asymmetric power of, for example,

managing two moves simultaneously, being at different stages of experience or seniority, supporting each other in/through raising children or through periods of difficulty, as well as negotiating access to limited resources such as space and time on a daily basis. CMC may experience competition between partners as stressful but ultimately it can be constructive in alerting partners to various asymmetries of power thus enabling them to find ways to resolve or manage the resulting challenges to their personal or professional relationships. Concern and support for wider family members and friends extend the reach of CMC dyads and influence them in pursuing particular ministries in specific geographic location.

Implications and Recommendations for Good Practice for CMC and Their Managers

In this section I suggest a number of ways that CMC ministry practice in the Church of England might be improved, based on this research. These include the importance of training and information about CMC ministry, the ecosystem of power as a tool for investigation and analysis and increased understanding of CMC for senior managers. Sharing wisdom about CMC across dioceses is recommended. I highlight the implications of the principle of individual vocations in selection of CMC and make suggestions about supporting and placing future CMC couples in training. I consider how the vulnerability of early-career CMC can be ameliorated and how CMC in later ministry can be advised and encouraged. Next, I outline how particular issues affecting CMC can be approached, including as flexibility over time, housing and finance.

While consolidation of some personnel practices has taken place in the Church of England since the introduction of Common Tenure (Rooms and Steen, 2008; General Synod of the Church of England, 2009), dioceses remain diverse in their approaches to issues such as CMC according to the attitudes, experience and theological position of their senior staff, particularly diocesan bishops. I recommend, therefore, a minimum national policy of not discriminating against CMC directly or indirectly. The greatest benefit to CMC beyond this, given their own variations in preferred ways of working and models of ministry (see chapter 5), is in increasing transparency in diocesan policies and practice, alongside

improved awareness and understanding of senior clergy (especially those coming into post) and retaining wisdom from experienced CMC and their managers. I demonstrate in this research that attitudes and practices surrounding CMC vary widely between dioceses and over time. A key cause of vulnerability for CMC is the lack of information about pertinent policies and practice in different dioceses so that they are hindered in making judicious decisions about their ministries. Critical to good practice for CMC ministry, then, is good information, effective communication and consistent senior clergy training. Good information ensures that wisdom about CMC ministry is retained and kept current, effective communication ensures that information is available to CMC and those working with them, while training for senior clergy ensures consistent good practice across time and across dioceses, regardless of the number of CMC present. Such preparedness would enable senior clergy to be ready to welcome CMC and manage them effectively. The situation for CMC would be ameliorated by improved awareness, understanding and treatment of CMC across dioceses nationally and by improved openness about the policies and practices that are in place. Good practice and experience among senior clergy is often lost when individuals move on or retire, so consistent and on-going training for new and existing senior clergy would ensure that CMC are understood and supported with informed understanding. The variation between dioceses means that it would be of benefit if national (Ministry Division) guidelines about CMC ministry were kept updated and effectively disseminated to ordinands, CMC and senior clergy and officers as well as ministry training establishments. I recommend that each diocese should publish a position statement and policy to give information about their approach to CMC ministry and to provide accountability for CMC in the diocese.

Understanding CMC ministry patterns as within an ecosystem of power illuminates beneficial potential for future CMC practice in the Church of England. The application of the ecosystem of power as a tool for investigating and analysing ministry includes helping individuals understand their position relative to other elements within wider social structures. For example, this approach could help CMC understand the root of their frustrations at the start of their ministry lives. It could also help senior clergy realise that although CMC

might have responsibility for their ministry choices (Ministry Division, 2009), they only have the power to do so where are given the opportunity, especially at times of double/multiple vulnerability. Thus increased awareness among senior staff about ecosystems of power of which they are a part, with their overt and covert aspects, could help them work positively with CMC and others. As a development of using a system, or ecology, of power as an analytical tool for congregational contexts (e.g. Percy, 1998, 2006, 2019), the concept of an ecosystem of power is a conceptual and visual tool that can aid researchers analyse the dynamics in social systems with regard to power, especially combined with the use of ecograms (Rickert and Rettig, 2008). Developing the ecosystem of power as a tool for further studies in practical theology to support good practice could prove fruitful, then, including for other groups of clergy. Any clergy person, ministerial context and category of ministry could be mapped in a similar way, to which extent this study is offered as an initial exemplar of the paradigm.

The approach of bishops, archdeacons and DDOs, from selection onwards throughout CMC ministry lives, is key to fruitful and positive CMC ministries. Participants' experiences over many years of CMC ministry indicate particular priorities for senior clergy and managers. These include the need to raise awareness of CMC in financial need, whose earning potential is less than many non-clergy spouses. Creativity and flexibility is needed from senior clergy about ministry possibilities for CMC. While financial constraints (such as pertain in considering providing new clergy posts) can mitigate against creative thought, need can also prove to be the catalyst to positive new approaches. CMC understand practical limitations but to flourish in their ministries over time, they value flexibility in appointments and ministry arrangements where possible. It is difficult to underestimate the value of personal support for CMC and of understanding CMC to be a blessing to the Church rather than a problem. While CMC tend to give of their time and energy with generosity, senior clergy need to be wary of taking CMC spouses for granted, but must value both partners equally.

The lack of information and guidance available openly and easily to potential or existing CMC, senior clergy, potential training incumbents, diocesan or central church staff exacerbates the existing asymmetry of power in the system for CMC. Where practice is not noted and shared, each case is dealt with in isolation, dependent on the experience of individuals and/or patterns of practice in each diocese, which increases variation between dioceses. Notably, the last published *Guidelines for Clergy Couples* (Ministry Division, 2009) is difficult to find. Many CMC have never seen a copy and are unaware that such guidelines have been produced, or their content. Improved good practice across the Church of England requires increasing cooperation between the dioceses about CMC ministry.

Communicating what is standard practice in individual dioceses is helpful to CMC considering moving across dioceses. This may include indications of support for CMC ministry as well as practices with indirect impact on CMC such as part-time incumbencies, incumbents living outside their parishes, and good practice about different housing options for CMC. Overt assurance that full stipends will be paid to CMC according to post is helpful. Senior clergy can support CMC in their sensitivity to the level of vulnerability of CMC, especially at times of uncertainty in their ordained life.

Bishops, DDOs and Ministry Division need to give attention to the implications of the Ministry Division guidelines that state that partners entering the ordination selection process simultaneously should attend separate selection conferences (BAPs)**.** This practice supports the normative understanding of individual (rather than shared) vocations that has been foundational to CMC ministry in the Church of England. While DDOs and Ministry Division appear to have generally adhered to this recommendation in the past, recent increases in candidates for ordination (Church of England 2016c; Davies, 2014) are likely to create pressure for exceptions to be made due to the limited availability of BAPs. This would have connotations for the operant theological and practical understanding of a 'joint vocation' that has hitherto been clearly avoided by privileging individual discernment over the shared sense of vocation in a committed marriage relationship. While this principle can be frustrating to

potential CMC who believe that they are both being called to ordained ministry together, it allows for a variety of marriage-and-ministry models to develop through the course of CMC ministry lives, while clarifying the status of both calls to ordained ministry. This last point is critical in the eventuality of marriage breakdown, widowhood or the ministerial incapacity of either spouse, where confusion could arise about the vocation of one or both partners. The principle of individual vocations arguably discourages stronger partners from taking advantage of their spouse and less confident partners from sheltering behind the other and minimises the potential fusion between partners that Walrond-Skinner (1998) identifies.

Some bishops, diocesan and national staff seem uncertain in how to respond to potential CMC, particularly when couples form during training. Although this can be when individuals do not support CMC ministry in principle, it is more often through lack of experience, knowledge or awareness. Further uncertainty is prompted by practical concerns about funding and how to accommodate an extra deacon if the diocese has insufficient curacy opportunities. Current guidance for DDOs (Ministry Division, 2017) makes no mention of avoiding the supervision of one spouse by other, although this principle does appear still to be normally followed. CMC who are couples before selection often give careful consideration to the potential of their ministries together and separately (within the limitations of their self-knowledge and foreknowledge about how they will want to minister in the future). They can further equip themselves for future ministry by talking to CMC in a variety of ministry situations and exploring possible ministry pattern options.

Early career CMC are highly vulnerable because of limited experience and knowledge combined with a high level of exposure to decision-making by senior staff. Future CMC often find themselves 'released' from previously supportive dioceses to seek training curacies in unknown dioceses, exacerbating their existing vulnerability; they are personally unknown in their new diocese/s and do not have a reserve of social capital from relationships with members of the diocesan hierarchy established during selection and training. This is also true

for ordinands with a partner who is already ordained moving into a different diocese for a new post. Such ordinands are at particular vulnerability and lack the flexibility of options available to those already ordained or clergy partners in other professions. The Church of England and its dioceses need to be aware of their particular responsibility to supporting CMC during this period of their ministries. While senior staff's expectations of clergy to be independent, responsible, and flexible are understandable, it is important that the choices of CMC regarding their type of ministry model is respected as far as possible throughout their ministry lives. However, those with authority to make decisions affecting CMC need to be conscious of the particular constraints on them as couples. Even if the options are limited in practice, senior staff modelling and facilitating mature and open communication is valuable to CMC. Senior clergy can assist CMC to think through the implications of different types and patterns of ministry and introduce couples to other CMC, especially during training and early ministry.

Dioceses should make every effort to find suitable training posts for CMC partners of their existing clergy, and to support them finding a reasonable alternative in a neighbouring diocese if nothing is available. Diocesan and training establishment staff need to know how to give positive support to CMC. Equally, CMC, dioceses, and training establishments need to be creatively aware of the range of options for curacies including practicalities such as for shared stipends for joint posts. CMC need information about how different dioceses respond to CMC in order to seek curacies (and further posts) where they are welcomed and supported by the provision of placements that reflect the training needs of both partners. When CMC are not being ordained at the same time, a suitable curacy for the second partner has to be found that is local to the established partner's ministry context. This can lead to considerable compromise on the part of the CMC, such as a taking a non-stipendiary or part-time curacy in place of a full-time one, or a placement in a parish of a church tradition very different from their own. High levels of flexibility by CMC is a frequent feature throughout their ministry lives but must not be exploited.

At any job-change CMC are exposed because appointment decisions are beyond the control of applicants. There is often limited availability of appropriate posts for two CMC in a particular area. CMC also need to co-ordinate the timing of two moves. While CMC have the ability to leave and apply for posts, they need to maintain a positive approach, realistic goals, make effective applications and maintain good relationships with senior staff. For CMC, it can be beneficial to consider in advance what level of integration between ministry and family is most suitable and sustainable for them at the point of changing post, and whether they are looking for positions of equal status or prioritising one partner's appointment over the other (e.g. in timing, seniority and/or relative absorptiveness). Assumptions about expectations in these and other matters have great potential to cause problems if not discussed and resolved within the couple.

Even where CMC have a pre-existing agreement of which partner's career will take priority, development through experience and changes in situation may prompt priorities to change over time according to unanticipated and anticipated events and factors. Issues that can affect CMC ministry decisions include health issues, relative ages, preference for and availability of different aspects/types of ministry and availability of suitable accommodation. High levels of flexibility are evident in CMC ministry patterns regarding, for example, geography, patterns and combination of posts and childcare (including whether or not external child-care is engaged and the consequences for each partner's level of engagement in ministries).

Increased numbers of multi-parish benefices and self-supporting ministers have established the principle of clergy being allowed to live in nearby parishes so there is no reason for bishops to refuse to allow CMC to be non-resident incumbents as long as they are able to reach their parishes reasonably easily. Collaborative conversations between senior staff, parishes and clergy can aid creative solutions about housing for CMC appointed to separate parishes. CMC need space to work and hold meetings of a pastoral and business nature in each parish as well as space to maintain a pastoral and missional presence locally. How this is achieved will vary according to family and individual need

as well as the nature of the parish. It should not be assumed by the parish or senior clergy that a CMC couple would be able to share working accommodation in a single vicarage without adequate working space in the other parish.

CMC and those working with them need to understand the implications on pension provision of periods of splitting stipends or one or both partners being part-time or unpaid. Unanticipated circumstances may create challenging financial situations (e.g. death of one partner, separation/divorce). Given CMC shifts across different types of ministry through their careers, education about finance should not be restricted to stipendiary CMC. This would aid CMC making informed decisions about their forms of ministry at different times. Life assurance should be considered seriously by CMC. A full exploration of the impact of student debt on CMC remuneration needs to be made, given the increasing impact of such debt on clergy lives.

This research has application beyond the Church of England, both in other professions and in other religious traditions and denominations where married/partnered people work in the same field. Although a number of other religious traditions had CMC before the Church of England, indicating the potential for sharing good practice between institutions, timeline interviewing may be useful for researching Anglican CMC beyond the Church of England, clergy of other denominations and beyond. The model of an ecosystem of power is further offered as a way of investigating and interpreting diverse power relationships for couples within varied work contexts, such as universities, schools, farming, business and the military and police.

Limitations of the Present Study, Implications and Potential for Future Research

In such an under-researched area there are numerous pressing possibilities for future research about CMC as a distinct and growing group. There is potential to continue this work not only within clergy and/ministry studies but also in research on marriage and family life. Further practical theological research would usefully add to knowledge in this field and facilitate improved practice.

The sample of 15 CMC (with data gathered on 30 individuals, i.e. both spouses in the couples) is modest, however, it represents 3% of the total 994 ministerially active CMC in the Church of England. A larger scale research project may reveal further illuminating features of CMC life and ministry, as would comparative ecumenical study of CMC ministry in different church traditions and denominations (including, for example, the Salvation Army with its foundational history of couples in ministry together).

Participants in my research had to be reachable for interviewing by a lone researcher. Participants and their partners represented past and present ministry in 15 dioceses and sponsorship for training by 5 further dioceses (totalling 20 of the 42 dioceses), a study of CMC covering all Church of England dioceses could provide more detailed data about variation in diocesan practice as well as further examples of good practice, and opportunities to compare various policies and practice. Further study among senior clergy and National Church Institutions about CMC practice would be constructive in ascertaining their attitudes and understanding, especially within the context of an ecosystem of power.

With a focus on the ministries of CMC from the clergy perspective, this study has given scant attention to CMC's ministerial contexts so there is further fruitful opportunity to understand how CMC function in congregations and as chaplains or other non-parochial roles in the Church of England, especially for individuals and groups in the congregation or ministry context, developing Sigmon and Sigmon's (2001) work on co-pastoring. Similarly, this research only considers CMC children from the parents' perspective. The experience of children of CMC would be informative for families, churches and senior clergy wishing to understand and support CMC families well.

Only heterosexual couples were included in this research because of the higher levels of complex secrecy for some same-sex clergy partnered with other clergy, whether in civil partnerships (allowed by church rules) or marriages (which are not currently allowable for ministerially active clergy in the Church of England). Including this group would have created distinct issues of research

ethics and methodology different from heterosexual CMC. A future study focusing on same-sex clergy partnered to clergy would extend the current understanding of CMC and provide a fascinating comparator. Studies extending beyond the Church of England would broaden the scope further and illuminate examples of churches where same sex CMC already exist in the UK and beyond.

This study included only current CMC, thus excluding those no longer married to fellow clergy and couples and individuals who have left active ministry. While participants had experienced challenges in their ministries and marriage relationships, factors contributing to CMC marriage breakdown were beyond the scope of this research. Consideration of this area could lead to improved support for CMC in marriage difficulties, while research into CMC leaving public ministry may contribute to assisting CMC thinking of doing so. Updating and extending Walrond-Skinner's (1998) research, especially following up on her cohort of CMC participants, would provide valuable insights into CMC marriage relationships.

Timelines in Practical Theological Research

The methodological development of using timeline interviewing in practical theology in my research shows that timelines are a valuable tool for the structuring of interviews and eliciting participants' accounts of their lived experience over time. The development of timeline interviewing provides an effective method for practical theological enquiry because it enables participants to engage actively in the interview process as they think and write/draw to create their timeline, supported by visual prompts and cues as the timeline progresses. As a structure for interviewing, timelines enable researchers and participants to recall and reflect on long periods of time in a condensed fashion and consider a complex interaction of diverse factors. Additionally, my research showed that timelines provide a way of comparing different participant experiences, with the potential of creating quantitative data for analysis in addition to transcripts of qualitative interviews.

In pastoral practice timelines can assist individuals and groups through offering new perspective on changes in the past and preparing for a range of

possibilities in the future. CMC timelines illustrate the existence of different ministry options, helping clergy to operate conscious flexibility according to the needs of their personal and family situations and in the face of constraints that prevail in the light of opportunities open to them, thus aiding pastoral care and career support. Timeline interviewing is therefore a valuable development for practical theological research into situations, experiences and phenomena concerned with the paradigm of change over time, as well as support for pastoral practice.

Conclusion

My research creates space for the unique perspective of CMC to be heard and the position of CMC within an ecosystem of power better understood. Although some information existed about the number and areas of ministry of CMC in the Church of England the lacuna was, why do CMC engage in their particular ministries; what are the factors behind their choices over the course of their ministry lives? I had a 'hunch' (McCutcheon, 2012) that the issue of power was central to the problem and that CMC's wider context might be key to understanding CMC ministry over time. The development of ecosystems of power as a concept has been a response to the lived experience of CMC participants who shared with me their insights into their ministry patterns. I therefore framed my analysis using the ecosystem of power that extended existing practical theological models of the living human web and social ecology. I connected these with models of ecosystems in the natural world and Percy's notion of an ecology of power. I used interviews structured by the creation of a visually represented timeline of the CMC couple's ministry life; the timeline method resulted in additional quantitative data that I was able to analyse and triangulate with qualitative data from interview transcripts.

In this thesis I have argued that CMC ministry patterns are formed over time through a complex interplay of inequalities of power in the social system, or ecosystem, surrounding CMC. At times vulnerable to the power of institutional elements, CMC also exercise their own determination through adopting particular models of family and ministry and choosing priorities in response to constraints and responsibilities impinging upon them. The dynamic of the couple

is central to CMC ministry decisions in terms of both support and competition that is integral to their ecosystem of power.

This study is part of the task of establishing a knowledge base about the CMC in the Church of England and contributing to the development of practice of CMC ministry. My hope is that not only does this thesis take forward knowledge about CMC ministry lives in an ecosystem of power within the academy but also that CMC and those who work with them will experience the identification and resonance, of which Swinton and Mowat (2016) write, through finding applicability to themselves in the results (p. 45). Ultimately, however, as CMC seek to serve the world through God's church among their fellow Christians, I hope that the fruit of this study will be improved practice for these dedicated clergy, helping them to thrive and be fruitful in their vocation and service.

Appendix A.
Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research project that is investigating what factors affect the ministry patterns of clergy married to clergy in the Church of England. Revd. Susie Collingridge, a doctoral student at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Chester, is conducting the study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask Susie Collingridge if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like any more information. Please feel free to take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of the study is to explore the patterns of ministry of clergy married to clergy in the Church of England.

The study investigates what factors influence clergy married to clergy in choosing the ministries in which they have served during their careers so far.

This project and its findings will contribute to the study of the ministry of the Church in contemporary Britain, and to the study of clergy married to clergy.

Why have I been asked to take part in this study?
You have been asked to participate in this research because:

- You are an ordained minister in the Church of England who is married to another ordained minister in the Church of England.
- You are active in Anglican ministry (holding a Bishop's licence or Permission to Officiate). You may be involved in any kind of ministry, whether parochial or non-parochial, full- or part-time, paid or unpaid.

Whether or not you minister in the same place/context as your husband/wife is not important, nor does it matter whether it is known by others that your spouse is also ordained. Your age, ethnicity, theological tradition or any other aspect of your background does not matter; we would like to interview clergy from a range of settings and levels of experience.

Do I have to take part?
The choice to take part in this study is yours. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. During the interview, you are not under any obligation to reply to any questions you feel uncomfortable answering, and you can stop and leave the interview at any time. Please feel free to contact Susie Collingridge to discuss any questions or concerns you may have before deciding to take part.

What will happen if I take part?
If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign the consent form. This will give your consent for Susie Collingridge, a research student in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Chester, to contact you to arrange an interview at a time and place that is convenient for you.

At the interview, which will last approximately 90-120 minutes, you will be asked to talk about the different ministries you have been involved in, times out of active ministry, and your personal/family situation at different times, looking at the various reasons why you choose those particular ministries. You will be invited to put these different elements on a timeline to help us understand how the various factors fit together. The interview will be guided by both the interviewer and your personal experiences and views. With your permission, the interview will be recorded and transcribed. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript to ensure it is an accurate and faithful record of the interview, and you may keep a copy of the timeline. At a later stage, it may be helpful to arrange a second meeting with you. You do not have to agree to this now, and you are free to withdraw from any further involvement, at any stage.

What are the possible risks or disadvantages of taking part?
You may want to share quite sensitive professional, family or personal information during the interview/s, and we are aware that revealing such information to others may risk embarrassment. What you choose to share is entirely in your hands, and your confidentiality will be respected (see below).

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
As an ordained person married to another member of the clergy you may welcome the opportunity to discuss and share your experiences in relation to your personal, family and professional life. By taking part, you are helping to understand the ministry of clergy married to clergy, which is a very under-researched area in Theology and Religious Studies, and we hope that this research will have a positive impact on good practice in the Church.

What if something goes wrong?
If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact:

Professor Robert E Warner
[Address and contact details here]

Will my interview and what I say be anonymised, and is what I share confidential?
Susie Collingridge will be conducting the interviews. At interview, Susie will discuss how you would like to be identified in the transcripts (the written version of the interview) and any publications. You can be completely

anonymised, or you can decide what information (such as your name or age) you would like anonymised or altered.
Susie is planning to transcribe all the interviews, but a research assistant may be employed to help her either at this, or a later stage. At interview, Susie will discuss whether you are comfortable with this possibility. If not, you are free to stipulate this.

Susie will read the transcripts, which will be anonymised in the ways you would like. If you take part in the interview, we will be using extracts from your transcripts when presenting the research at conferences, and when we publish the research findings.

Who is researching this project?
The research will be carried out by Revd. Susie Collingridge, as part of her Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology (DProf).

Who can I contact for further information?
If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not you would like to take part, please do not hesitate to contact:

Revd. Susie Collingridge
[Address and Contact details here]

Thank you very much for your interest in this research.

Appendix B.
Consent Form

Title of Project: Factors affecting the ministry patterns of clergy married to clergy in the Church of England

Name of Researcher: Revd. Susie Collingridge

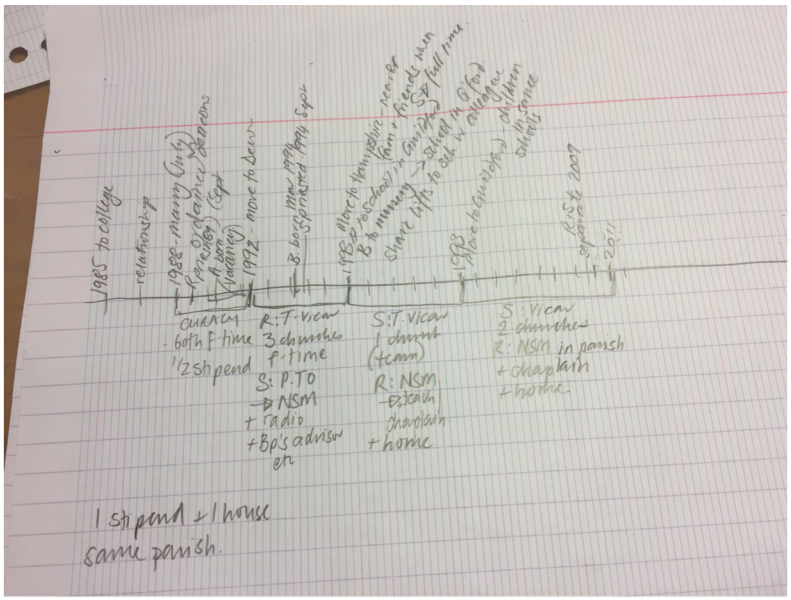
		Please initial box
1.	I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, dated 8th May 2014 for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	☐
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without my care or legal rights being affected.	☐
3.	I agree to take part in the above study.	☐

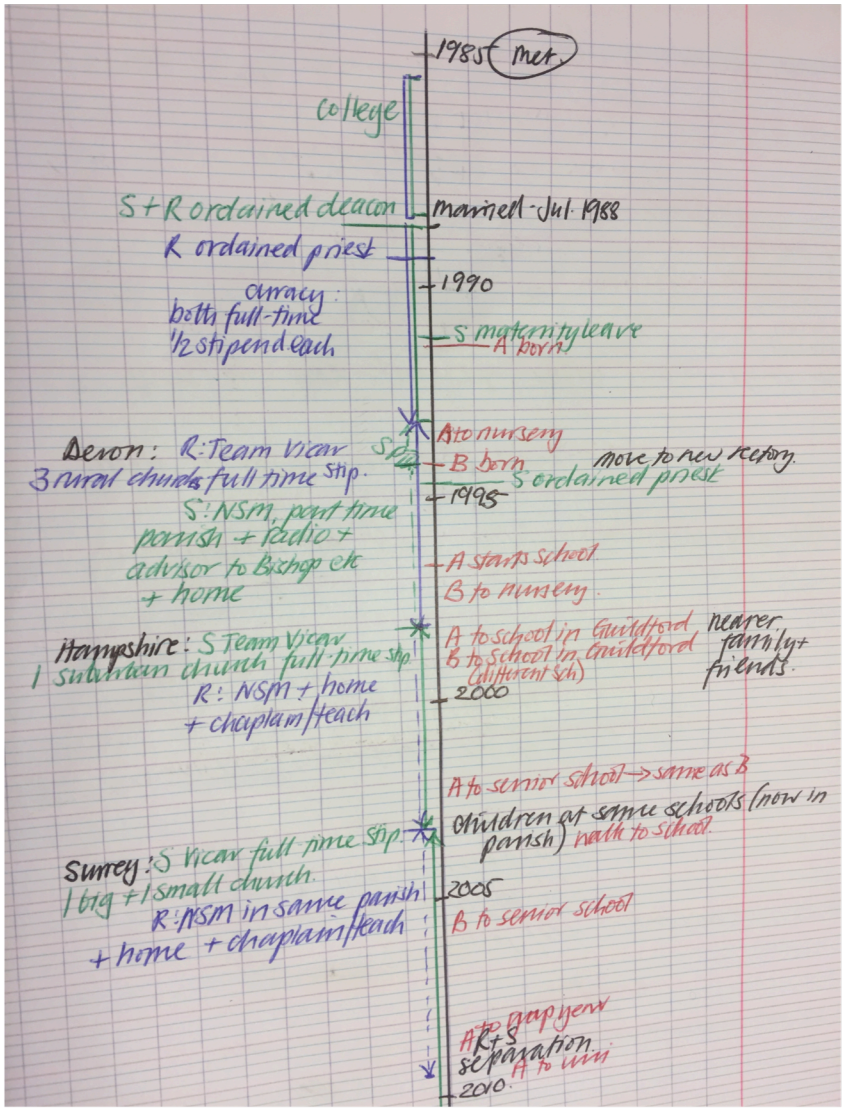
Name of Participant	Date	Signature

Name of Person taking consent (if different from researcher)	Date	Signature

Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix C.
Timeline Example (researcher's own)





Appendix D. CMC Timeline Results Spreadsheet.

Interview number	Age at ordination (F)	Age at ordination (M)	Difference between Column B & C	Age at interview (F)	Age at interview (M)	Difference in age at interview	Years as CMC (total) *divide/2 for each individual*	Years as CMC individual	Years in active ministry F	Years in active ministry M	Proportion of time as CMC that have been in active ministry (J/J) Female	Proportion of time as CMC that have been in active ministry [L/J] Male	Years in non-church work F	Years in non-church work M
1	40	40	0	52	52	0	24	12	6	6	0.5	0.5	0	6
2	38	42	4	51	55	4	26	13	8.39	10.25	0.6453846	0.7884615	2.4	0
3	30	27	-3	56	53	-3	52	26	20	21.5	0.7692308	0.8269231	0	0
4	30	30	0	63	63	0	66	33	28.9	23.5	0.8757576	0.7121212	0	0
5	33	39	6	49	55	6	32	16	11.5	16	0.71875	1	0	0
6	26	25	-1	31	30	-1	10	5	4.5	5	0.9	1	0	0
7	44	31	-5	60	63	3	32	16	13.5	16	0.84375	1	0	0
8	27	24	-3	31	29	-2	10	5	5	5	1	1	0	0
9	27	30	3	40	41	1	22	11	11	11	1	1	0	0
10	27	26	-1	50	48	-2	46	23	16.5	16.5	0.7173913	0.7173913	0	0
11	45	24	-21	53	59	6	16	8	5	8	0.625	1	1.5	0
12	31	35	4	44	45	1	20	10	4.7	10	0.47	1	0	0
13	25	32	7	38	34	-4	4	2	2	2	1	1	0	0
14	50	55	5	68	67	-1	24	12	12	12	1	1	0	0
15	46	25	-21	50	52	-2	8	4	4	3	1	0.75	0	2
	34.6	32.3333333	-26	49.0666667	49.7333333	6	392	196	152.99	165.75	12.0652643	13.2948971	3.9	8
	sample av.	sample av.		sample av.	sample av.	2.4	26.1333333	13.0666667	10.1993333	11.05	0.8043509	0.8863264	0.26	0.5333333
	31.5	34.1428571	(av. men old	45.625	54	(average difference)	7	av time CMC	av time in mi	av time in ministry:		80.40%	88.60%	2 of 15
		(correct?)			sample av. (n				10.1993333					
		33.4666667			49.8125	F older by	(total/2)	196						2 of 15
		av of whole sample				2.14						0.0819755		
						average	average					8.2% difference		
		Men greater variation				6	13.066667							
	variation	24-55				M older by				0.0925231	0.1019596			
	25-50					3.5								
						average								

CMC Ministries: Timeline Results

Years in stipendiary parish F	Years in stipendiary parish M	Years in non-stipendiary parish F	Years in non-stipendiary parish M	Total years in parochial ministry F	Total years in parochial ministry M	Proportion of time in parochial ministry F	Proportion of time in parochial ministry M	Years in non-parochial ministry F	Years in non-parochial ministry M	Proportion of time in non-parochial ministry F	Proportion of time in non-parochial ministry M	Years in family responsibilities F	Years in family responsibilities M	Proportion of time in family responsibilities F	Proportion of time in family responsibilities M
6	6	0	0	6	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	6	0	0.5	0
3.75	10.25	0	0	3.75	10.25	0.44696067	1	2.24	0	0.26698451	0	2.25	2.25	0.17307692	0.17307692
13	17.5	3	0	16	17.5	0.8	0.81395349	4	4	0.2	0.18604651	4	1.2	0.15384615	0.04615385
6.5	19.5	16.4	2	22.9	21.5	0.79238754	0.91489362	6	2	0.20761246	0.08510638	3	3	0.09090909	0.09090909
9.5	16	0	0	9.5	16	0.82608696	1	2	0	0.17391304	0	0	0	0	0
4.5	5	0	0	4.5	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.1	0
5	16	2	0	7	16	0.51851852	1	6.5	0	0.48148148	0	0	0	0	0
4	5	0	0	4	5	0.8	1	1	0	0.2	0	0	0	0	0
11	11	0	0	11	11	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	12.5	0	0	13	12.5	0.78787879	0.75757576	3.5	4	0.21212121	0.24242424	6.5	6.5	0.2826087	0.2826087
0	0	4	0	4	0	0.8	0	1	8	0.2	1	2.5	0	0.3125	0
0	6	0	0	0	6	0	0.6	4.7	4	1	0.4	5.1	0	0.51	0
2	2	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	4	3	3	12	7	1	0.58333333	0	5	0	0.41666667	0	0	0	0
1	3	3	0	4	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
88.25	133.75	31.4	5	119.65	138.75	11.7718325	12.6697562	30.94	27	2.9421127	2.3302438	29.85	12.95	2.12294086	0.59274856
5.88333333	8.91666667	2.09333333	0.33333333	7.97666667	9.25	0.78478883	0.84465041	2.06266667	1.8	0.19614085	0.15534959	1.99	0.86333333	0.14152939	0.03951657
	7.4					av of total	av of total			av of 15	av of 15	8 of 15	4 of 15	8 of 15	4 of 15
13 of 15 had	some time	6 of 15 had	some time			0.81471962		9 of 15 had	some time			av of those affected		av of those affected:	
	14 of 15 had	some time	2 of 15 had	some time		av of M & F			6 of 15 had	some time		3.73125	3.2375	0.26536761	0.14818714
		5.23333333	2.5												
		between 6	between 2					3.43777778	4.5	0.17574522					
						0.84084518	0.90498259	av for the 9	av for the 6	av of M & F (30)					
						av of 14	av of 14								
										0.32690141	0.38837397				
						0.87291388				av of 9 F	av of 6 M				

CMC Ministries: Timeline Results

Years F senior to M in same type of context, inc Area Dean	Years M senior to F in same type of context, inc Area Dean	Years in equal seniority	Proportion of time F senior to M	Proportion of time M senior to F	Proportion of time in equal seniority	Unaccounted for F	Unaccounted for M	Met before training	Trained together	Met while training	Met when one already ordained	F ordained first	M ordained first	Ordained together	Number of children (includes those from previous marriages, adopted	Children born during CMC training & ministry
5	8	4	0.41666667	0.66666667	0.33333333	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	0
0	2	4.5	0	0.15384615	0.34615385	2.36	0.5	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
2	4	16	0.07692308	0.15384615	0.61538462	2	3.3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
2.5	28	6.5	0.07575758	0.84848485	0.1969697	1.1	6.5	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
0	10	6	0	0.625	0.375	4.5	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
0	0.5	3	0	0.1	0.6	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
0	16	0	0	1	0	2.5	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0
0	0	4	0	0	0.8	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	2
2	0	9	0.18181818	0	0.81818182	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
1	0	8	0.04347826	0	0.34782609	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	0.2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2
2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2
4	0	3	0.33333333	0	0.25	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
0	3	0	0	0.75	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	4	0
18.5	71.5	64	2.1279771	4.29784382	4.6828494	13.16	11.3	11	9	3	2	4	3	8	34	16
1.23333333	4.76666667	4.26666667	0.14186514	0.28652292	0.31218996	0.87733333	0.75333333								2.26666667	1.77777778
7 of 15	8 of 15	10 of 15	7 of 15	8 of 15	10 of 15	7 of 15	4 of 15									
2.64285714	8.9375	6.4	0.30399673	0.53723048	0.46828494	1.88	2.825									
						av for 7 wom	av for 4 men									

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